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FOR ANOTHER'S SINS!



CLARA ON THE WAR-PATH!

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FOR ANOTHER'S SINS

By Frank Richards.

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Story

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Young Lady on the War-path!

"SEEN Billy?"

Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form at Greyfriars, asked that question, with a fat grin upon his face.

Harry Wharton & Co. were chatting near the gates when Sammy of the Second rolled in and stopped to address them.

"In the tuckshop, most likely," answered Bob Cherry. "Look there first, and then in the pantry."

"I say—"

"And if he's not in either, look for him at somebody's cupboard," suggested Johnny Bull.

"I say, it's serious," said Sammy Bunter. "I want to find Billy at once. It's awfully serious! He, he, he!"

Harry Wharton looked at him.

"You don't look very serious about it," he remarked.

Sammy chortled.

"Well, it's funny, too; but it's jolly serious for Billy!" he said. "Tain't a joke for a chap to be licked by a girl, is it?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Licked?" repeated Bob Cherry. "By a girl?"

"He, he! Yes."

"Billy Bunter hasn't been fighting with a girl, surely?" exclaimed Frank Nugent, in astonishment.

"Not yet."

"Is he going to?" exclaimed Wharton. "He will be jolly soon stopped if he begins! You'd better tell him that when you see him."

"He, he, he! I don't suppose he wants to," grinned Sammy. "Poor old Billy has been talking too much."

"As per usual!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"That is not a newful happening," remarked Hurree Singh. "The esteemed Billy's jawfulness is terrific."

"Well, Clara Trevlyn is coming over from Cliff House on the war-path," continued Sammy.

"My hat!"

"She's going to lick him—at least, she says so!" Sammy chortled spasmodically. "Fancy poor old Billy being licked by a girl! He, he, he! I'm going to warn him. Where is he?"

"Blessed if I know," said Bob. "But look here, you fat young rascal, is this straight goods, or are you—Buntering?"

"Straight as a string!" grinned Sammy. "You know how poor old Billy swanks. He's been saying something about Clara being spoony on him."

"The fat worm!"

"She doesn't seem to like it," said Sammy. "Of course, I don't see how a girl could really be soft on Billy. He's so jolly fat!"

"Such a contrast to his slim and graceful minor," remarked Nugent.

"Oh, don't be funny!" grunted Sammy. "Anyhow, Clara's awfully waxy."



"How did she know about the silly duffer gassing?" asked Bob.

"I dare say Hazel told her; he was over there to-day," said Sammy. "Hazel uses his chin too much. Anyhow, Clara's in an awful wax, and she's coming over on her bike to see Billy about it."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Serve him right," said Johnny Bull. "He ought to be punched for talking about girls. I don't see why Clara shouldn't punch him."

Harry Wharton frowned.

"There was no need for Clara to hear about his silly gas," he said. "I'm not surprised she's annoyed. But—"

"I've just passed 'em in the lane!" chuckled Sammy Bunter. "Marjorie and Barbara are with Clara, and they're trying to persuade her not to come."

"And what did Clara say?"

"He, he! She told 'em to go and eat coke!"

"Oh!"

"She'll be here in a few minutes," said Sammy. "Look here, if you know where Billy is—"

"Bother Billy!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Bunter had better keep out of sight for a bit," said Harry Wharton. "Find him, and tell him to hide somewhere, Sammy. He was in his study a little while ago. You may find him there."

"Right-ho!"

Sammy Bunter, still grinning, rolled on towards the School House, feeling it his brotherly duty to give his major the tip. His brotherly regard for Billy Bunter, however, did not prevent him from seeing the comic side of the affair—an aspect that would probably be quite lost on Bunter himself.

"I—I say, we must chip in in this," said Harry Wharton, glancing at his chums' serious faces. "Bunter is a fat cad to talk as he does, but he's too much of an idiot to know it. He thinks every girl he meets is fascinated by him. He's been kicked a dozen times for making out that Marjorie Hazeldene gives him the glad eye, as the little beast calls it. But—but a girl pitching into him is rather—rather—ahem!"

"Serve him jolly well right!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ye-es; but—"

"One of us can do it instead," suggested Bob Cherry. "Let's make Clara the offer."

"That's a good idea."

"The punchfulness of Bunter is the proper caper," remarked Hurree Jamset

of Wally Bunter at Greyfriars.

Ram Singh. "But it should be the manful hand that administers the esteemed punch, and not the lily-like fist of the esteemed feminine gender."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on," said Harry.

The Famous Five turned out at the school gates, and moved quickly along the lane to meet the Cliff House girls on the way.

There was a sudden ring, and the whir of a bicycle.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Clara!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

The chums of the Remove halted as the cyclist came whizzing round the bend in the road. Wharton waved his hand.

"Hold on, Clara!"

"Can't stop!"

"But, I say—"

"I'm going to Greyfriars to box Bunter's ears!"

"But I—I say, Clara—I say—"

But Miss Clara was past; and she rode on to the school, unheeding, at a great rate. The Famous Five looked at one another.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" murmured Nugent.

"There's no stopping her now!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they are!"

Three more cyclists came in sight—Marjorie Hazeldene and Barbara Redfern of Cliff House, and Hazeldene of the Greyfriars Remove. Hazel was grinning; but the two girls looked serious and disturbed. They jumped down as they came up with Harry Wharton & Co.

"Has Clara passed?" exclaimed Marjorie breathlessly.

"Yes."

"Oh dear!"

"Ha, ha!" roared Hazel. "She's going to box Bunter's ears! What a lark!"

"It's not a lark!" exclaimed Marjorie indignantly. "Clara is angry, of course—she is right there; but—"

"But somebody else would box Bunter's ears for her," said Barbara Redfern. "I'm sure Bob Cherry would, if she asked him."

"Like a bird!" said Bob promptly.

"But—" began Wharton.

"Bunter has been impertinent, as usual," said Marjorie, her cheeks colouring a little. "You know the offensive way he has of speaking. And Hazel—it was silly of you, Hazel—"

"Well, I didn't know Clara would get her rag out like that," said Hazeldene. "I only mentioned what Bunter said as a joke. Why, it's a month or more since he said it!"

"That makes no difference," said Barbara.

"Well, you were an ass to bring it out before Clara, whatever he said!" growled Bob Cherry.

"What rot! I only meant it as a joke. How was I to know Clara would get her wool off?" said Hazeldene. "Bunter always thinks girls are in love with him. He thinks his beauty does it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Clara got quite wild, and rushed for her bike," said Hazel. "Why, if every girl Bunter thinks is in love with him were to box his ears he wouldn't have any ears left. They'd get worn out."

"We—we'd better follow Clara, I think," murmured Marjorie.

The juniors and the schoolgirls went on to the gates of Greyfriars in a dismayed frame of mind—excepting Hazel, who was grinning. Miss Clara certainly had a right to be angry; but to visit Greyfriars for the purpose of boxing the ears of a Greyfriars fellow was an extraordinary step. But Miss Clara was a very determined young lady, and it certainly looked as if Bunter's ears were going to be boxed.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Nice for Wally!

"I SAY, Billy!"

Bunter of the Remove was in Study No. 7 when Sammy arrived there in a rather breathless state between hurrying and chortling.

Bunter's study-mates, Todd and Dutton, were with him. Peter Todd was working at a corner of the table, and Bunter and Tom Dutton were at another corner. And every now and then, as he worked, Peter would raise his head and glance at Bunter with a very curious expression.

Bunter was helping Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, with French.

For Bunter of the Remove to help anybody with anything was sufficiently remarkable. And to help the deaf junior was more difficult than helping anybody else. And with French! Bunter's French had always been a standing joke in the Remove, and the despair of Monsieur Charpentier. Yet Peter could not deny that Bunter was really affording Dutton valuable aid at the present moment. He knew his subject, and knew it well.

But really, since Bunter had turned out to be a first-class footballer, Peter felt that he had no right to be surprised at anything he did.

For it was still a dead secret that Billy Bunter of the Remove had changed places with his cousin and double, Wally Bunter; and Peter would have been very much surprised to learn that his present study-mate was not the Billy Bunter he had always known.

In appearance he was Billy Bunter; but it was a case in which appearances were deceptive—very deceptive indeed.

Bunter did not look up as his minor blinked into Study No. 7. He was busy. Sammy rolled in, and gave him a dig in the ribs with a fat thumb.

"I say, Billy—"

"Gerrou!"

"But, I say—"

"Buzz off!" exclaimed Wally Bunter, in great exasperation. "I haven't had a remittance, and I've nothing to lend! Travel!"

Sammy blinked at him indignantly.

"Well, I like that!" he exclaimed.

"When I've come here to give you a warning—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Clara Trevlyn's after you!" roared Sammy.

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Well, I've warned you!" said Sammy sulkily. "Don't say I didn't! You might at least be decently grateful, Billy. I can jolly well tell you that Clara will be here in a few minutes, and then you can look out for squalls!"

"Who's Clara Trevlyn?"

"Eh?"

Wally Bunter turned round, and blinked at Sammy over Billy Bunter's big glasses, stuck low down on his fat little nose.

"Look here, what are you driving at?" he exclaimed.

"You know jolly well who Clara Trevlyn is!" replied Sammy. "What are you driving at, if you come to that?"

Wally bit his lip.

He had been some weeks at Greyfriars now, and he was well used to the place, and found it easy enough to play the part of Billy Bunter. But every now and then something cropped up that caught him unawares. But he remembered now that he had heard Clara's name; he had come into contact with the Cliff House girls on an occasion when he had visited Billy Bunter long ago.

"You mean Marjorie Hazeldene's friend at Cliff House School?" he asked.

"You know I do!" snapped Sammy.

"Yes, I—I know you do! Well, what about her?"

"She's after you."

"After me!" repeated Wally in perplexity. "Do you mean she's coming to see me?"

"I jolly well do!" grinned Sammy. "Wharton says you'd better get out of sight somewhere."

"Why should I get out of sight?"

"Well, if you'd rather be licked by a girl—"

"What!" yelled Wally.

"She's coming here to box your ears."

"Bub-bub-box my ears!" stammered Wally.

"He, he! That's the programme! He, he!"

Wally Bunter stared blankly at Sammy of the Second. He understood that the fag intended to do him a good turn by bringing him this warning. But that was all he understood.

Peter Todd laid down his pen, and looked across the table seriously. Tom Dutton was looking on, puzzled. He did not hear a word.

"Why should Clara Trevlyn come here and box my ears?" stammered Wally at last.

"Because of what you said about her."

"I've said nothing about her!" exclaimed Wally hotly. "Does anybody think I'm the kind of chap to say things about a girl?"

"I imagine a good many people think you are, Bunter," said Peter Todd drily. "I've heard you myself, a lot of times, if you come to that!"

Wally gave him a fierce look.

"That's not true!" he said.

"What?" roared Peter.

"I—I—I mean—" stammered the unfortunate impostor. "I—I mean, of course, not—not since—for the last few weeks, anyhow!"

"That's so," said Peter, with a nod.

"I admit that for a month or more, Bunter, I haven't heard you say anything caddish, and I can't understand it yet. But before that—"

"You'd better hook it, Billy," said Sammy Bunter. "Clara's sure to come straight to this study. And she's in a terrific wax."

"But—but—but what does she think I—I said?" stammered Wally.

"You said she was spoony on you."

"I didn't!" howled Wally.

"Well, she thinks you did, and Hazel let it out for a joke," said Sammy.

"Why, I've heard you say so about Marjorie, and about Barbara, too, and Mabel Lynn—"

"You haven't!"

"I have! And so has Toddy—haven't you, Toddy?"

"Certainly I have!" said Peter Todd.

"I've given you the stump, Bunter, for

speaking disrespectfully of Marjorie, and you know it!"

"Oh, you're an ass!" said Wally peevishly. "If you knew—"

"If I knew what?"

"Nothing! Look here! It's all a mistake. And—and—and what the thump am I going to do?" gasped Wally. "I—I can't have my ears boxed, you know, and I can't hit a girl! It ain't fair!"

"Better let her go ahead," said Peter judicially. "You've asked for it, so you can't grumble at getting it. Take it as a punishment for your sins, and don't talk like a fat cad any more."

"You silly ass!"

"Dodge her," said Sammy. "Hide under the table. Oh, my hat—you've wasted too much time, Billy—here she comes!"

Sammy Bunter rolled out of the study chortling. A slim and graceful figure and a flushed face appeared in the passage, and two or three Removites were there, too.

"This way, Miss Trevlyn!" chuckled Skinner. "Bunter's in his study."

"You'll find him at home!" roared Bolsover major. "I'll hold him for you, if you like!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Evidently Miss Clara's mission was already known.

More Removites came out of their studies, or up the stairs. It was the first time the Remove passage had been invaded by a young lady on the war-path, and the news spread like wildfire. Everybody wanted to see the entertainment.

Unheeding the laughing juniors, Miss Clara walked on to Study No. 7 with a determined brow and a gleam in her eyes.

"Come in, Miss Trevlyn," said Peter Todd, politely opening the door wide. "I hear you're after Bunter's ears. They're quite at your service. Here's Bunter, and there's his ears! Pile in!"

Wally Bunter jumped up from his chair, and backed round the table as Miss Clara came grimly towards him.

"I—I say—" he stammered.

"Come here!" rapped out, Miss Clara.

"I—I—I prefer this side of the table, if you don't mind," stammered Wally.

"I—I say, what's the matter, you know? I—I hope I haven't offended you in any way."

"What a hopeful nature!" murmured Vernon-Smith, in the passage, and there was a ripple of laughter.

Miss Clara fixed her eyes on the unhappy fat junior across the study table.

"I've come here to box your ears, Bunter!" she said.

"Oh, I say—"

"You have been speaking of me like a cad!"

"I—I haven't—"

"Hazel repeated what you said—"

"The silly, tattling ass!" groaned Wally. "Why couldn't he hold his silly tongue? But—but I say, it's all a mistake—"

"It's not a mistake," said Miss Clara calmly. "Will you come round the table to me, or shall I come round to you?"

"I—I say—"

"Are you coming?"

"Nunno! I—I— Oh, my hat!"

The fat junior broke off with a gasp as Miss Clara ran swiftly round the table. Wally Bunter fled round it in the other direction breathlessly. From the crowded doorway and passage there came a howl of merriment.

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Go it, Miss Trevlyn!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Two to one on Clara!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came up the staircase to the Remove passage with consternation in their faces. Marjorie and Barbara waited in the hall below, looking sorely troubled. As the Co. came up the staircase they heard the roars of laughter from the Remove quarters. Evidently the juniors were enjoying themselves.

"Hallo! You chaps are just in time!" remarked Vernon-Smith, with a chuckle, as the Famous Five came along the passage to No. 7. "Bunter's having a high old time!"

"Is Clara—" began Wharton. "She's chasing him round the study-table," said Squiff.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"She seems to be waxy," grinned the Bounder. "Here, let a fellow look! Take your head out of the way, Skinner!"

"Don't shove!"

"Give a fellow a chance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar, as there was a crash in the study.

Bunter was circumnavigating the table again at top speed, and a chair had gone spinning into the fender.

"Hurrah!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

Miss Clara paused once more, panting. Angry and indignant as the young lady was, she realised that this chase round the study-table was not a dignified proceeding.

Wally stopped, and blinked at her breathlessly across the table. He had made one attempt to dodge out of the study; but the door was blocked, and the juniors were not disposed to let him pass. Their opinion was that the Owl of the Remove deserved punishment, and they did not see why he should not get it.

Poor Wally panted, quite at a loss. He liked Miss Clara, and he would willingly have obliged her, but not to the extent of submitting to having his ears boxed. There was a limit.

"Will you stop?" gasped Miss Clara.

"Nunno! I say—"

"I'll stop him for you, if you like!" called out Skinner.

"You'd better not!" roared Wally.

But Harold Skinner squeezed into the study, eager to reap a little cheap glory. It ought not to have been a difficult business to stop Bunter. But this was not quite the Bunter Skinner believed.

Skinner laid hands on the fat junior, and the next moment he was on his back on the carpet, gasping.

"Oh! Ow-ow!" howled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Miss Clara made a movement, and Wally stood ready to dodge. His eyes wandered to the open window behind him. He backed away suddenly to the window.

"Hold on, Bunter, you ass!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "Do you want to break your fat neck?"

Wally Bunter did not heed.

With an activity that was amazing in so plump a youth he jerked himself into the window, and remained kneeling on the ledge, holding on to the sash, and blinking into the study.

His position was dangerous enough, for the window-ledge was at least forty feet from the ground.

The juniors stared at him. No one had ever suspected Bunter of possessing such nerve.

Miss Clara was alarmed.

"Come in at once!" she exclaimed.

"No fear!" answered Wally. "You

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 575.

keep off, Miss Trevlyn, or I'll shin down the ivy!"

"You'll break your neck!" shouted Peter Todd. "It's as much as I can do to climb down the ivy!"

"Never mind my neck," answered Wally. "I'm thinking of my ears!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Clara—" murmured Harry Wharton.

"I'm going to box his ears!" said Clara determinedly. "I came here to do it, and I'm going to do it! I'll wait!"

Miss Clara sat down in the armchair, evidently resolved to wait till Wally Bunter came in from the window-ledge.

"I—I say—" began Wally. "It's all a mistake, you know! I—I never said a word about you, Miss Trevlyn!"

"Gammon!" said Hazeldene, from the passage. "I heard you!"

"So did I," said Skinner, who was rubbing his nose ruefully. "Lots of fellows heard you, for that matter!"

"It's all a mistake—"

"Rats!"

"Don't tell whoppers!"

"I—I say, I can't stick on this window-ledge for ever, Miss Trevlyn!" pleaded Wally Bunter.

"Come in, then!"

"Will you make it pax?"

"I'm going to box your ears!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Better go through it, and get it over, Bunter," advised Bob Cherry. "After all, you asked for it, you know!"

"Oh, you're an ass!"

Wally glanced below him, at the ivy-covered wall. The ivy was ancient and thick, but it had more than once supported a daring climber.

To the surprise and alarm of the juniors, Wally changed his grasp from the window-ledge to the ivy.

"I'm off!" he said.

"Come back!" shouted Wharton. "You fat duffer, you can't do it! You'll fall! Come back at once!"

"Bow-wow!"

"You'll fall!" roared Bob Cherry.

"The fallfulness will be terrific!"

"Rats!"

Miss Clara started up as Wally's head disappeared below the level of the window.

"Come back, Bunter! I—I'll let you off!" she exclaimed, in alarm.

"All serene; I'm going!"

Wally Bunter went down the thick ivy, hand-below-hand. The window above him was crowded with heads, anxious faces looking downward at him as he went. But the juniors' minds were soon relieved. Wally seemed as active as a monkey, and it was quickly apparent that he was in no danger. If he had lost his nerve, certainly he must have shot down like a stone, but his nerve seemed to be of iron.

"Well, my hat!" said Peter Todd dazedly. "Bunter—Bunter, you know—that fat idiot—it beats me! Blessed if we've ever understood Bunter!"

"Is he—is he safe?" faltered Clara.

"Safe as houses!" said Bob Cherry.

"He'll be on the ground in a minute or two. All serene!"

"Oh! Then I'll go down!"

Miss Clara ran from the study. As soon as it was certain that Bunter was in no danger Miss Clara's wrath revived. She scudded down the passage and the staircase, with the evident intention of cutting Bunter off as he landed in the quadrangle.

"Clara!" called Marjorie, as she passed the two Cliff House girls in the hall.

Clara ran out of the School House without replying. Marjorie and Barbara followed her at once. They were just in time to see a fat figure streaking across the quad at top speed.

It was Wally Bunter. He was down first, and he did not pause an instant.

He vanished into the Cloisters.

Marjorie and Barbara overtook Miss Clara, and caught hold of her arms.

"Now, come along!" said Barbara.

"But Bunter—"

"Never mind Bunter! Come along!" said Marjorie severely.

"I haven't boxed his ears yet."

"Bother his ears!" exclaimed Barbara.

"What would Miss Primrose say if she knew you were making a scene here?"

"Who's making a scene?"

"You are, my dear! Look at that crowd of boys laughing—"

"Bother them!"

"Come along!" said Marjorie, half laughing and half exasperated.

"Do you want us to give you the frog's-march, Clara?" demanded Barbara.

"I—I say"—Harry Wharton came up

"Clara, you can leave Bunter to us; you can, really. We'll take the matter in hand, and give him a lesson. Honest Injun!"

Miss Clara sniffed. But Bunter had vanished from sight, and Marjorie and Babs had a firm hold on her arms. The incensed young lady yielded the point at last.

"You mean that?" she demanded.

"Honour bright!"

"All right, then. You needn't pull me, Marjorie. I'm coming."

And Miss Clara consented to return to her bicycle—much to the relief of Marjorie and Barbara. The Famous Five were relieved, too, when they saw the Cliff House girls off at the gates.

"My word!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"What a row! I say, we've got to deal with Bunter. He ought to be taught a lesson."

"And he's going to be!" said Harry Wharton, frowning. "The fat rascal! He's a disgrace to the Form! Look at those Fourth Form rotters cackling!"

Temple, Dabney, & Co. of the Fourth seemed to be in a mood of great amusement. Cecil Reginald Temple called out to the chums of the Remove as they came back from the gates:

"Which of you was the young lady after, Wharton?"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"I hear she was going to box somebody's ears. Yours, Bull?"

"No!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, yours, Cherry?"

"Go and eat coke!" growled Bob.

The Famous Five strode away frowning, leaving Temple & Co. grinning. They looked in the Cloisters for Bunter, but the fat junior had vanished. He was not seen again for some time. While there was still any possibility of Miss Clara being near, Wally Bunter was understudying Brer Fox, and lying low—very low indeed.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Good Samaritan!

I'VE a good mind to chuck it!" growled Wally Bunter.

Billy Bunter's double was rolling along the lane, with a discontented frown puckering his fat brow.

There was an unopened letter in his hand, at which he glanced once or twice, with his frown deepening.

Wally had slipped out of the Cloisters, and cleared off to put a good distance between himself and Miss Clara Trevlyn. It was exasperating, for he had undertaken to help Tom Dutton with his French that afternoon, and after that he had intended to get some football. Both French and footer had to be postponed indefinitely. Wally's great preoccupa-

tion at present was to keep out of Miss Clara's reach.

He had met the postman as he left Greyfriars, and had received a letter from him. It was not a very welcome letter, for he had recognised his cousin Billy's hand in the superscription. Without troubling to open it, he walked on, keeping his eyes well about him.

The jingle of a bicycle in the lane sent him scudding across the fields towards the cliffs without waiting to see the cyclist. Wally feared no foe of the masculine variety, but he was very much afraid of Miss Clara.

"It's rotten!" he muttered. "I keep on thinking it's all right, and then something that fat boulder Billy has done rises up and smites me. Fancy being brought to book for something that boulder said about somebody before I came to Greyfriars! And I can't explain—unless I chuck up the game and clear off to St. Jim's, and let Billy come back."

And Wally grunted.

He did not want to leave Greyfriars. In spite of Billy's reputation, he was making his way there. But such happenings as that of the present afternoon were very discouraging.

"After all, I shall have to go to St. Jim's some day," he murmured. "This little game can't very well last longer than the term. Billy will get fed up with St. Jim's—or St. Jim's will get fed up with him, at any rate. I wonder what the fat boulder's got to say?"

Wally was ascending the cliff path, taking the loveliest route up the cliffs. He did not want to risk falling in with any Cliff House girls that afternoon. He would rather have met a grisly ghost than Miss Clara.

He stopped at last, and sat down on a big boulder, and carelessly opened the letter from his cousin. He grunted as he glanced over it. It was quite a characteristic letter from Billy Bunter:

"St. Jim's, Monday.

"Dear Cousin,—I hope you are getting on all right at Greyfriars. I am having a realy toping time at St. Jim's. Everybody likes me hear, and, in fact, I think I may say I'm the most poppular fellow in the school. I've had rather a lot of worrey laity through lots of felows competing to have me in their studdies. It's agreeable, of corse, to be so much sort after, but it grows a bit of a boar in the long run.

"I happen to be rather shoart of money at the present moment, owing to a disappoinment about a postal-order. If you happen to be flush, you might send me a few bob, which I will not fale to return as soon as my postal-order arives. I am expecting it by evvry poast now.

"Try to behave yourself decently at Greyfriars, and remember that the felows take you for a gentleman, and act accordingly. I cannot help feling rather uneezy about this, and I hope you are keeping up the credit of my name.

"Better kepe clear of the Cliff House girls. Some of them, especially Marjorie and Clara, are rather swete on me, so it would be orkward if you shove yourself into the place.

"If you get a letter from Bessie saying anything about half-a-crown, don't send the half-crown, but send it to me, and I will forward it. This is verry important.—Your affectionate cousin,

"W. G. BUNTER.

"P.S.—If you could send five bob, I will send on my postal-order the minnit it comes. Make it tern if you can.

"W. G. B."

Wally read that interesting epistle through, and then methodically tore it into pieces, and let the wind carry the

fragments away seaward. It was rather important not to risk letting his communications from Billy Bunter be seen. Bunter exercised a certain amount of caution, but if anyone had seen his letters it would not have been difficult to guess the real state of affairs.

"Fat boulder!" grunted Wally.

He took another letter from his pocket, which was scrawled in a girlish round-hand, not unlike Bunter's fist. It ran:

"Dear Billy,—I have not received the half-crown you owe me. The one you sent was not the one I meen. Please send it on at once, also three-halfpence for the stamp on this letter. Don't be a beast.—Your affectionate sister,
"BESSIE BUNTER."

"What a nice family!" murmured Wally. "I suppose I'd better send cousin Bessie the blessed half-crown, or she may be looking in at Greyfriars for it. I wonder if she'd know my fist from Billy's? Bother Billy, and bother Bessie, and bother Sammy—bother the whole tribe! I've a good mind to chuck

abruptly, and it required a strong nerve to stand steady near the verge.

Wally dropped on his knees and looked over.

Ten feet or so below him, on the steep slope, a man was huddled against a jutting spur of rock.

Evidently he had slipped from the path above, and the jut of rock had saved him from slipping farther.

"My hat!" ejaculated Wally. "How did you get down there?"

"I slipped on the path and rolled down," came a gasping voice from below. "I've been here an hour or more. Help!"

"Why don't you climb up?"

"I can't."

Wally grinned faintly.

The climb on the steep cliff would not have been too difficult for him, but it was a different proposition for the stout, middle-aged gentleman who had fallen.

"Have you a rope?"

"No."

"Can you help me?"

"I'll try."



Dodging Clara! (See Chapter 3.)

it up, only—only I don't want to leave Greyfriars!"

He sat on the boulder, staring out towards the sea, over which the early winter dusk was already creeping. He rose at last, and moved along the steep path, whistling.

His whistle suddenly ceased, and he gave a start and looked round quickly. From somewhere amid the rocks a cry came to his ears.

"Help!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Wally.

He had supposed himself to be alone on the rugged cliff-side. At that cry all thought of Billy Bunter and Bessie and the vengeful Miss Clara vanished from his mind. He looked round him quickly, but there was no one to be seen.

"Help!"

"Hallo!" shouted Wally. "Where are you?"

"Here! Help!"

The voice guided him, and the fat junior, in great surprise, ran to the edge of the rugged path.

On the seaward side the cliff fell away

Wally wrinkled his brows as he looked down.

"I've been here an hour, at least!" groaned the man below. "I heard you whistle just now, and called. Can you go to Cliff House and get help from there?"

"Cliff House! That's a good two miles from here."

The stout gentleman gasped.

"Oh dear! Don't leave me, my boy! Don't go!"

"All right; I won't," said Wally reassuringly. "I'll help you somehow. Were you going to Cliff House?"

"Yes; I have a daughter there," mumbled the man below. "They told me in the village that this was a short cut to Cliff House. Ow!"

"So it is, if you know the way," said Wally. "It's dangerous for strangers, though."

"I have found that out. I was afraid I should have to stay here all night!" groaned the fat gentleman.

"You'd be seen from the beach in the morning," said Wally.

The stout gentleman's reply to that was a snort. Evidently he did not want to cling on to the cliff till he was seen from the beach in the morning.

"Can you help me?" he snapped. "Climb as far as you can, and I'll reach down and help you as soon as you're near enough."

"I can't!" "Oh, my hat!" murmured Wally. "If I move from this spot I may roll down farther."

"Not if you're careful. Try." "I am not a schoolboy or a monkey!" snorted the stout gentleman. "Don't talk nonsense!"

"Oh!" murmured Wally. The stout gentleman's temper had evidently suffered from his adventure. But Wally did not think of leaving him to shift for himself. He was a good-natured fellow, and he could feel for a short-winded, middle-aged gentleman in such a scrape.

"Well, I'll come down," he answered. There was a sharp exclamation from the man below.

"Mind! If you slip you may roll down to the beach! That is why I cannot move from here without assistance."

"I sha'n't slip," answered Wally cheerfully. "Wait a minute, and I'll be alongside."

The fat junior put his feet over the ledge, and, keeping a strong hold on the broken edges of the rock, lowered himself down the slope.

It was not an easy task, nor a safe one, for losing hold meant rolling down the steep declivity to the beach, which would certainly have resulted in a broken limb.

But Wally had plenty of nerve, and, in spite of his weight, he was as active as a monkey.

He lowered himself carefully, hand-below-hand, till he was on a level with the stout gentleman, and rested against the jutting spur.

"Here we are!" he said cheerily. "Yes, here we are!" gasped the hapless stranger. "And how are we to get out of it—what? There ought to be a fence along the path. There ought to be something—Oh dear! All because I could not get a cab at the station. There ought to be a cab at the station."

"Certainly there ought," said Wally soothingly. "There generally is. Perhaps somebody else had taken it."

Snort! "Ahem!"

"And the man in Friardale told me this was a short cut. I believe he wanted me to break my neck!" gasped the stout gentleman.

"Perhaps he meant the other path. There's a safer path on the other side of the cliff."

Snort! "Most likely you took the wrong turning, sir."

"Is there a signpost at the turning?" "No."

"Then there ought to be!" snorted the stout gentleman. "Why is not there a signpost at the turning?"

"I really don't know!" murmured Wally. "But—"

Snort! "It's disgraceful! That's what is is—disgraceful! My daughter will be alarmed. I shall not be at Cliff House by tea-time now."

"You won't!" agreed Wally. "You may be able to drop in for supper."

"If you are making jokes, boy—"

"Ahem! Not at all. Now, if you'll let me help you, you'll get on like a house on fire," said Wally Bunter cu-

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couragingly. "I'll keep hold of your arm."

"It's not safe." "Safe as houses, sir. There's plenty of hold, and I've got you all the time."

The stout gentleman groaned. There was evidently nothing else to be done, but he did not seem inclined to make the attempt.

"Can you see my hat?" he demanded. "Your hat?"

"Yes; a silk hat. It fell off when I fell."

"On the beach most likely," said Wally, with a touch of impatience. "Better think about your neck, sir, and never mind your hat. It won't be so jolly easy to climb up after dark, and dark's coming on now."

"How can I present myself at Cliff House School without a hat?"

"Oh, crumbs! I'll lend you my cap, if you like."

"Boy, I did not ask for impertinence!"

"Look here, sir, will you get a move on?" exclaimed Wally, his good temper failing at last. "I didn't crawl down here for a conversazione! I've got to get back to Greyfriars for call-over, too. Buck up!"

Snort! But the stout gentleman got a move on at last. He clutched at the rough rock with both hands, and essayed to clamber upward; and Wally kept hold of him, and helped—with a strength few would have suspected him of, judging by appearances.

The irascible gentleman found the climb easier than he had anticipated, though certainly he would not have done it without the Greyfriars junior's assistance.

The ten feet of steep rock took a quarter of an hour to negotiate, and then the gentleman's hands were over the ledge at the top.

Wally pulled himself up easily enough, and helped the breathless man up on to the path.

"Safe now!" he said cheerily. "Oh! Ah! Ow! I am bruised, scratched! Ow-ow! You have pinched my arm holding me! Ow!"

Wally Bunter made no reply to that. He was sorry for the old gentleman's sufferings, but he could not help thinking him an extremely unreasonable old gentleman.

For a good ten minutes the stranger sat on the rugged path pumping in breath. Wally was thinking of locking-up at Greyfriars, but he did not care to leave him. The gentleman scrambled to his feet at last, and blinked round him in the growing dusk.

"Shall I come with you as far as the school, sir?" asked Wally politely.

He had resolved to chance calling-over in order to play the Good Samaritan.

"Certainly! I doubt if I could find the way alone in this darkness. This path ought not to be open to the public!" snapped the stout gentleman.

"It ought to be closed."

"This way, sir," said Wally. Snort!

The fat junior led the way, and they tramped on together in the thickening gloom till they came down to the beach, where the lights of the fishing village of Pegg gleamed in the darkness.

"There's Cliff House, sir," said Wally, pointing to the distant red roofs against the sky. "All serene now. I'll cut off, if you don't mind."

The old gentleman paused. He was still very angry and irritable, but he appeared to realise that his rescuer was not a proper object upon which to wreak his irritation.

"I am very much obliged to you, my boy," he said.

"Not at all, sir." "You ran a considerable risk in coming down the cliff for me."

Wally wondered whether that had only just dawned upon the stout gentleman. But he did not say so.

"You are a brave lad," went on the stout gentleman. "I should like to reward you in some way for helping me."

Wally drew back. "That's all right, sir! Good-night!"

"But—"

"I've got to cut, sir, or I shall be jolly well ragged at Greyfriars. Good-night, sir!"

And with that Wally Bunter scudded off.

The stout gentleman stared after him, gave a snort, and walked on towards Cliff House School. Wally Bunter, keeping up a steady trot, headed for Greyfriars—with the happy consciousness that he would be at least an hour late for calling-over, and that an interview with his Form-master awaited him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Pleasant Prospect!

"SEEN him?" "No."

"Fat rotter!" "The rotterfulness is terrific!"

remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a shake of the head. "The esteemed and disgusting Bunter is keeping out of sight, and hiding his light under a bushel with malice aforethought and felonious intent."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "My esteemed chums, I do not see the whyfulness of the cackle!"

"The whyfulness is your esteemed and ridiculous English, my excellent and fat-headed old pal!" answered Bob Cherry.

"We shall have to give Bunter up till after call-over. Time!"

The Famous Five went into Hall, with a crowd, to answer to their names. They had been looking for Bunter—as had a good many other fellows. But the fat junior had not been discovered.

Either he was still dodging Miss Clara, or he was dodging his Form-fellows; at all events, he was not to be found. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, took the roll-call, and Bunter did not answer to his name. The Remove-master frowned as he marked Bunter absent. Mr. Quelch was a stickler for order and punctuality.

"He's actually cut call-over," remarked Nugent, as the Greyfriars fellows streamed out of Hall. "That means a row with Quelch."

"And a row with the Remove to follow!" remarked Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, rather!"

"We shall have to leave it till dorm," said Harry Wharton. "He can't stay out after bed-time, anyhow."

And the Removites went to their studies, giving the Owl up for the present.

There was trouble waiting for Bunter when he returned. It was agreed on all hands that Miss Clara's wrongs had to be righted. Miss Clara, certainly, had been very drastic; but she had cause to be angry. And the fat conceit of Billy Bunter had always had an exasperating effect on the chums of the Remove. Billy Bunter was entitled to think, if he liked, that every girl he met became fascinated by his manly beauty; but he assuredly was not entitled to say so. And the Remove agreed that he had to have a lesson on the subject. The unfortunate circumstance was that the Remove were

dealing now with Wally Bunter, who certainly was not responsible for his cousin Billy's unpleasant swank. But they were not aware of that, and Wally could not tell them.

Prep was going on in the Remove studies when the fat junior arrived at Greyfriars. He looked tired and dusty when he came in. Bolsover major was coming downstairs as he entered, and he called to him.

"So you've come back, you fat bouncer?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" grunted Wally.

"You haven't got out of it by cutting calling-over."

Wally blinked at him over his glasses. "Out of what?" he asked.

"You don't know, of course!" remarked Bolsover major, sarcastically. "You didn't stay out on purpose, did you?"

"I—I say, Clara Trevlyn isn't here, is she?" exclaimed Wally in alarm. "I—I thought—"

"No; we've taken the matter in hand for her," explained Bolsover major. "We're going to deal with you, my pippin. After you've had your licking from Quelch you're going to have one from the Remove."

"What for?" demanded Wally warmly.

"For talking about Clara."

"I haven't talked about Clara!"

"Oh, don't tell whoppers!"

Wally Bunter opened his mouth for an angry retort, but he closed it again, and walked away to Mr. Quelch's study without answering Bolsover. The Remove-master met him with a stern brow; but his frown relaxed when Wally explained the cause of his absence. He eyed Bunter very keenly, however. Wally had a very uncomfortable feeling that Mr. Quelch was mentally weighing his statements, and debating whether to give them credence or not. The colour crept into his fat cheeks at the thought.

"I believe you, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch at last.

"I hope so, sir."

"Your statements have not always been accurate, Bunter," said the Remove-master drily. "However, I believe you, and I excuse you for missing roll-call. You may go!"

"Thank you, sir!"

And Wally went with a frowning brow. He wondered whether he would ever be able to live down his cousin Billy's reputation as a prevaricator.

Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were at work in Study No. 7 when Wally arrived there. Peter gave him a grim look.

"Licked?" he asked.

"No!" grunted Wally.

"Quelch let you off?" exclaimed Peter in surprise.

"Yes."

"You spun him some yarn, then!"

"I told him why I was late!" growled Wally.

"I'll jolly well bet you didn't!" grinned Peter. "You stayed out because you knew there was trouble waiting for you here; but you didn't tell Quelch that!"

"Nothing of the sort! I was kept out, helping a man who had tumbled over the cliffs."

"Go it!" said Peter.

"Don't you believe me?" howled Wally.

"Of course I don't, old scout!" said Peter, in surprise. "Did you expect me to?"

"Oh, rats!"

"But it's done no good," said Peter. "We've decided to make it a Form matter, and you've got to stand a Form inquiry, Bunter. We were going to hold it in the Rag; but as you've stayed out it

will be held in the dormitory to-night. You might as well have come in."

"I tell you I stayed out to help—"

"Don't tell me that one again, old scout; tell me an easier one!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Wally crossly.

"Is that the yarn you told Quelch?"

"Of course!"

"And he believed you?" asked Peter, in wonder.

"It was the truth."

"And he knows you, too!" said Peter Todd. "Quelch is losing his keenness. Why didn't you tell him you stayed out to rescue a beautiful damsel from pirates?"

"Eh? I didn't, you ass!"

"But it would have been just as true, and more thrilling!" urged Peter.

"You've really lost an opportunity!"

"Oh, you're a silly ass!" grunted Wally. And he sat down to his prep in far from a good temper.

He was not in a happy frame of mind as he worked. He was looking forward to "dorm" with deep misgivings. The study door opened while he was still at work, and Bob Cherry looked in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here you are!" exclaimed Bob.

"Here I am!" grunted Wally.

"We've been looking for you most of the afternoon," said Bob. "I suppose you know you've got to answer for your sins, Bunter?"

"That wouldn't hurt me!" growled Wally. "If you only knew—"

"Well, what?"

"Nothing! Take your face away and bury it, old chap; it worries me!"

"Why, you cheeky porpoise—"

"Don't worry!" snapped Wally.

Bob Cherry restrained his wrath, and left the study. Wally finished his work in a glum humour. Tom Dutton was putting his books away when the fat junior rose from the table.

"I'm sorry we couldn't finish the French this afternoon, Dutton," said the fat junior.

"Eh?"

"We'll, get on with the French to-morrow!" shouted Wally.

Dutton shook his head.

"I'm not going to lend you anything, Bunter," he answered. "No good trying to borrow off me. I think you're a cad, you know."

"What?"

"The way you talked about Clara Trevlyn," said Dutton. "Caddish, I call it. No wonder she was waxy. I'd have punched your head myself, if I'd known what it was all about."

"I haven't talked about anybody!" howled Wally. "It's all a mistake."

"Yes, it takes the cake right enough; though I'm surprised to hear you admit it, Bunter. You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself. Wharton has told Clara that the Remove will see that you get a lesson."

"Bother Wharton! And bother you!" growled Wally.

"Eh?"

"Fathead!"

Wally Bunter tramped out of the study. He came into the junior Common-room downstairs, and met grim looks on all sides.

"Well, what's the row?" demanded Wally resentfully.

"You know well enough," said Harry Wharton.

"Yaas, begad!" remarked Lord Maulverer. "You're an awful cad, you know, Bunter, and I'm goin' to find you guilty, whatever the evidence is like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

When Wingate came along to shepherd the juniors off to bed, some of the Removites looked rather curiously at

Bunter. As he knew what was in store for him, they half-expected him to appeal to the prefect. But Bunter did not speak to Wingate.

He went up to the dormitory with the rest, with a clouded brow. Entering the Remove dormitory that night was a good deal like going into the lion's den; but the unfortunate Wally had no choice in the matter. He would not "sneak" to a prefect and ask for protection; and the only alternative was to face the music, and answer for Billy Bunter's offences with all the fortitude he could muster.

But he was feeling very uneasy when the captain of Greyfriars put out the lights and left the dormitory.

There was no immediate move; and the fat junior began to hope that nothing would happen, after all. But the Removites were only waiting to make sure that Wingate was quite gone.

Wally drew a quick breath as he heard someone sit up in bed and strike a match. It was Harry Wharton.

Wharton lighted a candle, and a dim light flickered through the big dormitory.

"Up with you!" said the captain of the Remove tersely.

The juniors turned out on all sides. Even Lord Maulverer sat up in bed, propping his head against a pillow.

"Bunter!"

No reply from Bunter's bed.

"BUNTER!"

"Oh, let a chap go to sleep!" growled Wally.

"Turn out, Bunter!"

"Bosh!"

"Have him out!" commanded Wharton.

Bob Cherry and Squiff started for Bunter's bed. With a grunt Wally Bunter turned out, and the Removites gathered round him.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Dormitory Trial!

"ORDER!" Peter Todd rapped out the command. There was a reply from two or three juniors at once.

"Shut up, Toddy!"

"Order!" repeated Toddy. "This has got to be done according to rule. Bunter is entitled to speak up for himself, if he's got anything to say. Fair play's a jewel."

"We're going to give fair play, fat-head," said Bob Cherry. "He can say what he likes before we wallop him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anybody who tries walloping me will get a dot on the hoko!" said Wally Bunter. "That's a tip."

"Shut up, Bunter!" commanded Peter Todd. "I'm going to take up your defence, as you're in my study; and the less you say the better. Now, then, you fellows, get to bizney. Who's the accuser?"

"Look here, Toddy, we all know—"

"If there's an accusation, there's got to be an accuser," said Peter Todd. "You can leave it to me. You know my pater's a lawyer, and I'm following in my father's footsteps. Rely on me for legal knowledge."

"But you know as well as we do—"

"What I know is not evidence. There's got to be an accuser, or else the whole thing falls to the ground. I suppose the Greyfriars Remove are not Bolsheviks!" said Peter severely.

"Go it, Wharton!" said Squiff.

"You told Clara you'd see the fat bouncer brought to book."

"Public prosecutor, stand forward!"

grinned Bob Cherry.

"Oh, all right!" said the captain of the Remove. "I accuse Bunter—"
 "Order!"
 "Look here, Toddy, if you keep on interrupting—"
 "Order!" repeated the schoolboy lawyer. "The jury haven't been impanelled yet—nor the judge selected, and—"
 "We're all jury!" exclaimed Skinner.
 "And judge, too!" said Vernon-Smith. "I find Bunter guilty to begin with. You're wasting time, Toddy."
 "And you're taking too much on yourself, old top!" remarked Ogilvy. "I vote for putting Peter Todd in a back seat."
 "Hear, hear!"
 "Oh, let him rip!" said Wharton. "Ogilvy can be judge, and we're all jury. Now, then, are you satisfied, Toddy?"
 "So far, yes. Get on the judgement-seat, Ogilvy, and look serious. This is not a grinning matter."
 "My mistake—I thought it was!" said Ogilvy blandly.
 Three or four bolsters and pillows stacked on a bed made quite an imposing seat for the judge; and the Scottish junior took up his position there with due solemnity. The jury stood round, or sat on the beds, or on pillows on the floor. Three or four candles shed a flickering light on the scene.
 "The court is now open," said Peter Todd, with a good deal of dignity. "Now, then, on the ball, Ogilvy!"
 "Guilty!" said Ogilvy promptly.
 "You silly ass, he hasn't been tried yet!"
 "What does that matter?"
 "Look here—" began Wally Bunter restively.
 "Shut up, Bunter!"
 "Tell the prisoner to stand forward, Ogilvy, and ask him whether he's guilty or not guilty," said Peter.
 "What's the good, when he'll only tell lies?"
 "Order! The judge has no right to make remarks derogatory to the prisoner's character and prejudice the jury," said Peter severely. "If this goes on, I shall insist upon the case being withdrawn."
 "Oh, my hat!"
 "Do you want this bolster at your head, Peter Todd?" bawled Johnny Bull.
 "Put that man out!" rapped out Peter.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Why, you cheeky ass—"
 "Order!" said the judge. "Stand forward, Bunter. Are you guilty, or not guilty?"
 "Of what?" asked Wally.
 "That doesn't matter. Answer yes or no!"
 "How can I answer yes or no when I don't know what I'm accused of?" demanded the fat junior warmly.
 "It's no use asking me conundrums, prisoner. Answer my question."
 "Rats!"
 "The prisoner is entitled to know what he's accused of," interposed Peter Todd. "Get a move on, Wharton! You're public prosecutor."
 "I'll accuse him fast enough," said the captain of the Remove. "Bunter talked about Miss Clara Trevlyn in a caddish way, and got her wool off."
 "Getting her wool off is not an offence. Girls often get their wool off for nothing," said Ogilvy judicially. "I knew a girl who got her wool off because a chap sat on her hat. Keep to the point, Wharton."
 "Why, you ass—"
 "You are not allowed to call the judge an ass in a court of law," said

Peter Todd. "You are supposed to tell the truth, of course—but there are limits."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Now you know what you're accused of, Bunter," said the judge. "Do you plead guilty, or not guilty?"
 "Not guilty, my lord," said Wally.
 "Why, you awful fibber—" began the judge.
 "That's not law," said Peter Todd. "Judges aren't allowed to express personal opinions. My client—"
 "Your whatter?"
 "My client!" said the schoolboy lawyer firmly. "My respected client pleads—"
 "Great Scott!"
 "My respected client pleads not guilty. It is up to Wharton to prove his accusation!"
 "You know he did, Toddy!"
 "That's nothing to do with it. Prove your charge, or I demand a verdict of not guilty from the jury!"



"The Slacker!"

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"You jolly well won't get it, then!" said several members of the jury at once.
 "Call your witnesses, Wharton," said the judge. "If you pull that bolster from under me, Skinner, I'll dot you in the eye!"
 "Order!"
 "First witness, Hazeldene!" called out Wharton.
 "Oh, leave me out!" said Hazel.
 "Do you want a subpoena served on you?" asked Peter Todd. "Take him by the ears and yank him forward!"
 Hazeldene came forward rather hastily.
 "Tell the jury what you know," said the judge.
 "Well, I heard the fat beast bragging in the Common-room," said Hazel. "So did a lot of other fellows—"
 "Never mind the other fellows. Keep to the point," said Peter Todd.
 "Look here, you're not judge, Toddy!"
 "I'm counsel for the defence, and I'm cross-examining this witness. Kindly tell

the jury the exact words the accused used, witness."
 Hazel rubbed his nose.
 "Well, he said that what girls really admired was a chap with a figure—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "He bragged that lots of girls were spoony on him," said Hazel. "You've heard him yourself!"
 "Did he mention names?"
 "Yes. Two."
 "Give them to the jury."
 "Barbara Redfern and Clara Trevlyn."
 "Fat rotter!" came in several distinct growls from the jury.
 "What happened next?"
 "Somebody biffed the fat bouncer, and he rolled under the table. That was all that happened."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Was Miss Trevlyn present in the Common-room at the time?"
 "Of course not!"
 "Then how did the matter come to her knowledge?"
 "I told her this afternoon."
 "Did you consider that a right and proper step to take?" demanded Peter Todd sternly.
 "I thought it was rather a joke."
 "Your honour," said Peter, addressing the judge, "I submit that this witness is proved out of his own mouth to be a tattling ass, and is therefore unreliable. I object to this witness's evidence."
 "Look here—" began Hazel hotly.
 "Stand down, witness!" said the judge, with a nod. "You're a tattling ass. You ought to have had more sense!"
 "I jolly well think—"
 "Stand down!" roared the judge. Hazeldene sniffed, and retreated.
 "I think I can safely appeal to the jury for a verdict of not guilty, after that witness's evidence," said Peter Todd.
 "But you know he's guilty!" howled Bob Cherry.
 "Oh, don't be an ass, Cherry! A lawyer's business is to get his client off, whether guilty or not."
 "My only hat! Is that honest?" asked Bob.
 "It is regarded officially as honest enough for a court of law," said Peter Todd. "You don't seem to know anything about the law, Cherry. In the same way, a prosecuting lawyer's business is to get the prisoner convicted, whether he's innocent or not."
 "Rot!" said Bob. "Even a Hun wouldn't do that!"
 "This is not a proper place for the display of your ignorance of the law, Cherry. Give your chin a rest. Gentlemen of the jury—"
 "Hold on!" exclaimed Wharton. "I've got some more witnesses!"
 "Produce them," said the judge.
 "You shut up, Toddy. You talk too much."
 "Hear, hear!"
 "Any other fellow who was present when Bunter was bragging in the Common-room kindly stand forward," said the captain of the Remove.
 Three or four juniors came forward at once.
 "You first, Vernon-Smith! Do you corroborate Hazel's statements?"
 "Every word!" said the Bouncer.
 "Were you present?" demanded Peter Todd.
 "Yes. So were you. You were the chap who rolled Bunter under the table and shut him up, Toddy."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Never mind that—that's not evidence!" howled Peter Todd. "You were present when Bunter was alleged to have made these remarks derogatory to a lady we all respect?"
 "Oh, my hat! Yes!"
 "So was I," said Tom Redwing.

"Bunter talked like a fat rotter, and I should have biffed him if you hadn't, Toddy."

"Same here!" remarked Tom Brown.

"And here!" growled Russell.

Peter Todd looked rather at a loss. As an amateur lawyer, he desired to get his client off; though, as a member of the Remove, he would have been very pleased to take a hand in Bunter's punishment. The jury looked at him with grinning faces.

"Anything more to say, Toddy?" yawned Ogilvy.

"I've got my speech for the defence to make yet," said Peter Todd, with dignity.

"Go ahead, then, and cut it short!"

"Gentlemen of the jury," said Peter Todd, "I admit that the weight of evidence seems to be against my client."

"I should jolly well say so!" growled Bolsover major.

"But I venture to make an appeal to the jury," went on Peter Todd. "Look at my client! Look at his podgy face—his imbecile expression—"

"You silly ass!" roared the client.

"Silence! Look at him," said Peter Todd eloquently. "Observe his fat chivvy, his fat head, his general expression of imbecility. Is such a person responsible for his words or his actions? My client may have uttered the remarks attributed to him. I plead that he was not responsible. I hope to prove, to the satisfaction of the jury, that my client was not in his right senses when he made those remarks."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look at him!" repeated Toddy, pointing a forefinger at Wally Bunter's furious face. "Judge for yourselves whether any girl could behold that fat and idiotic countenance without a natural feeling of repugnance? Such being the case, how could the fat rotter imagine for a moment that any girl could possibly be spoons in his direction? I repeat—how? Only by a mental process, gentlemen, which amounts to insanity."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I claim the discharge of my client, therefore, on the ground that he is not mentally responsible," said Peter Todd. "He! Oh! Ah! Yah! Yoop!"

The eloquent counsel for the defence was suddenly interrupted by his infuriated client rushing upon him and getting his head into chancery. There was a roar from the jury as Peter Todd and Bunter waltzed among them, Peter struggling and roaring, and Bunter punching frantically at his eloquent defender.

"Yaroooh! Draggimoff—"

"You silly ass, take that—and that, you cheeky chump—and that, you silly owl—and that—and that—and that!" panted Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh!"

The jury, howling with laughter, rushed at them and dragged them apart. Peter Todd sat on the floor, quite dazed, and holding his nose.

"Yow-ow-ow!" he spluttered. "I—yow-ow!—throw up my brief—yoop!—he's guilty—yow-ow!—he ought to be hanged—yoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

For Another's Sins!

WALLY BUNTER wriggled in the grasp of half a dozen juniors, with a red and wrathful face. Whether Peter's eloquent plea would have got him off was doubtful; but it was certain that no more of Toddy's eloquence would be expended on his behalf. Peter held his nose with one hand,

and shook the other, clenched, at his client.

"Gentlemen of the jury, your verdict?" grinned the judge.

"Hold on!" howled Wally. "Ain't a chap entitled to his defence?"

"Your lawyer's thrown up the case," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Yow-ow-ow! Slaughter him!" came from Peter Todd.

"Never mind that ohin-wagging ass," said Wally. "I've a right to speak for myself!"

"Look here, you're not going to keep us up all-night!" said Wharton. "Buck up and plead guilty, and get it over!"

"I plead innocent!"

"Rats!"

"I never said a word that these chaps say I said!" exclaimed Wally indignantly. "Not a single syllable!"

"Why, we heard you!" shouted Tom Brown.

"You didn't!"

"What? You—"

"Let the prisoner say his say!" interposed the judge. "Fair play's a jewel."

"Is that your defence?" demanded Nugent. "You never did it—and it's weeks since you did it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nummo! But 'tain't fair play to bring up a thing against a chap after a long time, because—"

"Because what?"

"N-n-nothing! But, you see—"

"Oh, ring off!" said the judge. "Gentlemen of the jury, guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty!" roared the Remove.

"Not quite so loud. You'll have the prefects here. Billy Bunter, you are found guilty of speaking disrespectfully and caddishly of a lady, causing her to get fearfully waxy. You are sentenced to run the gauntlet twice—"

"Hear, hear!"

"And to apologise humbly to the offended lady in the presence of witnesses!" pursued the judge.

"Look here—"

"Jolly good idea!" exclaimed Wharton heartily.

"The goodness is terrific. The



Rescued from the rocks! (See Chapter 4.)

The accused is entitled to tell any lies he likes before he's sentenced. That's good law."

"Well, buck up, Bunter!"

"Pile in with the whoppers!"

Wally glared at the Removites. He could have proved his innocence easily enough by revealing his real identity; but that was not a step he could take. But how he was to escape condemnation for Billy Bunter's sins without revealing the fact that he was not Billy Bunter was a deep problem.

"I never said a word about Clara Trevlyn—" he began.

"We heard you!"

"That's a mistake!"

"Oh, my hat!" said the judge. "All these chaps are mistaken in thinking they heard you bragging like a fat cad?"

"Yes. You—you see—" stammered Wally. "I can't quite explain—"

"I jolly well think you can't!"

"But it's all a mistake—"

"Oh, come off!"

"Besides, it's a long time since it happened," urged Wally. "Weeks ago—"

"That makes no difference."

apologise will conciliate the terrific wrath of the infuriated Miss Clara!" said Hurree Singh.

The judge rolled off the bed.

"Pile in!" he said. "Form up, and take your pillows, and give him a over every time!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites promptly formed up in a double line to execute the sentence. Every fellow grasped a pillow or a bolster or a stuffed sock, and their looks showed that they did not mean to spare the sentenced victim.

Wally Bunter breathed hard.

It was not a pleasant ordeal that was before him; but he felt that less than the condemnation of the Form; for he condemned as thoroughly as anyone the caddishness of which he had been found guilty.

But there was nothing more to be said. His bargain with Billy Bunter held him silent on the subject of the change of identity. And there was no other defence to make.

"Ready, Bunter?" called out Squiff.

"Oh, rats!" growled Wally.

"Start him!"

Two or three juniors grasped the sentenced prisoner and started him down the line. Bolsover major's big foot behind him gave him a good start as he ran. And on both sides pillows and bolsters swiped on him with terrific vim.

The fat junior ran his hardest. He had to go through it, and he wanted to get it over as quickly as possible. But, fast as he ran, nearly every fellow put in a smite before he passed—some putting in two or three. Some of the fellows received swipes that were meant for Bunter, in the general eagerness to administer as much punishment as possible.

Wally was breathless and panting when he reached the end of the line.

"Back again!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"Ow!"

"Start him!"

"Ow-ow-ow!"

Back went Wally, under a shower of swiping pillows, gasping and panting. He emerged from the line at last, and rolled on the floor, breathless.

"Now give him the frog's-march!" exclaimed Bolsover major.

"Nothing of the sort!" said Harry Wharton. "Don't be such a dashed bully, Bolsover! He's had his punishment!"

"Ow-ow-ow!" came from the hapless fat junior. "Yow-ow-ow!"

"You've got to apologise publicly to Miss Trevlyn to-morrow, Bunter," said the captain of the Remove. "We're going to see you do it. Otherwise, you'll run the gauntlet again to-morrow night."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Cave!" ejaculated Ogilvy. "Somebody's coming!"

The candles were hastily extinguished, and the juniors bolted into bed like rabbits into their burrows. The din had evidently been heard below. The door opened.

"Are you awake, boys?" It was Mr. Quelch's voice.

Dead silence.

"I am sure I heard a noise!"

The juniors breathed steadily. Kipps ventured on a slight snore. There was a moment or two of suspense. Then the door closed again, and the Remove-master's footsteps died away down the passage.

"Sold again!" murmured Bob Cherry, and there was a chuckle.

The Removites settled down to sleep, but it was some time before Wally Bunter was asleep. He was still feeling the effects of running the gauntlet, and he was thinking, too, of the exceedingly unpleasant interview with Miss Clara on the morrow, when he was to apologise for something he hadn't done. His chief regret was that Billy Bunter was too far off to have his nose punched.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Gentle Persuasion!

"I SAY, Wharton—"

"Don't bother!"

"I say, Cherry—"

"Rats!"

"But look here—"

"Sheer off!"

The chums of the Remove walked on to the Form-room, and Wally Bunter blinked after them wrathfully. The Famous Five had been discussing what was to take place that day; and they were evidently not inclined to listen to any plea from the fat junior.

Wally followed them dismally to the Form-room for morning lessons. He had dire apprehensions of what was being arranged for his benefit. Since the time when Wally had pulled Frank Nugent

out of the river, and when he had played for the Remove in the Ilighcliffe football match, he had been on quite friendly terms with the Famous Five until this most unfortunate happening, due to Hazel talking too much at Cliff House. The incident of Miss Clara seemed to have spoiled everything once more.

Wally Bunter glanced at the Co. several times during morning lessons, but they gave him no sign. When the Remove were dismissed at a quarter to twelve, the five went to Study No. 1—plainly for a consultation. Wally watched them go with great uneasiness.

He was hanging about the Remove staircase when Peter Todd came along and slipped an arm through his and led him away.

"What's the game?" demanded Wally.

"Come and see," was Peter's reply.

And he led the fat junior into Study No. 1, where the Famous Five were collected.

A written paper lay on the table, and Wally glanced at it. Wharton took up the paper.

"We've drawn up the apology you're to make to Miss Trevlyn," he said.

"You're coming over to Cliff House with us after lessons, Bunter."

"I'm not!" growled Wally.

"You've got to see Miss Trevlyn—"

"I don't want to see her!"

"Well, she doesn't want to see you, if you come to that; but the apology has got to be delivered."

"It will be a useful lesson to you, Bunter," remarked Bob Cherry. "You'll learn to keep your silly mouth shut, you know."

"I never said a word—"

Cheese it! Tell him that he's got to say, Wharton."

"Listen to this, Bunter," said the captain of the Remove. "You're not going to be left a loophole to creep out of. You've got to repeat to Clara every word that's written here. Otherwise, you'll be ragged till you do. If you don't like it, that's your look-out. You shouldn't talk like a cad."

"You silly ass—"

"Shut up and listen! You've disgraced the Form and the school, and you've got to set matters right, as far as you can," said the captain of the Remove sternly. "Now, it runs like this: Miss Trevlyn, I'm here to express my profound regret that I've acted like a crawling cad."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wally.

"Repeat that!" said Wharton. "You've got to get it by heart!"

"All right! I'm here to express my profound regret that Wharton's acted like a crawling cad," said Wally.

"What!" roared Wharton.

"That's what you said, isn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at in that fat idiot's cheek!" exclaimed Wharton warmly. "You know I didn't mean that, Bunter! I was using the first person, as you've got to do. You express your profound regret that you've acted like a crawling cad. Repeat that!"

"You've acted like a crawling cad!" repeated Wally.

"You—you idiot!" shouted Wharton.

"You—you idiot!" repeated Wally.

"Look here—"

"Look here—"

"Stop repeating my words like a silly parrot!" exclaimed the exasperated captain of the Remove, as a chuckle ran through the study.

"But you told me to repeat them," said Wally innocently. "I'm only trying to please you."

Wharton breathed hard.

"You're going the right way to get a jolly good bumping!" he said. "Now,

repeat after me: 'I'm here to express my profound regret that I've acted like a crawling cad. I've been punished severely for my caddishness, and I promise that it shall never occur again.'"

"But you haven't been punished," said Wally.

"Will you repeat what I've read out, you fat duffer?"

"No, I won't!"

"You've got to get it by heart and repeat it to Clara Trevlyn at Cliff House after lessons to-day," said Johnny Bull.

"I jolly well won't!" said Wally emphatically. "I haven't acted like a cad, and I'm not going to say I did!"

"What do you call it, then, speaking about Clara as you did?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I didn't speak about her!"

"You know you did!" roared Bob.

"I know I didn't!"

"Blessed if I don't think the fellow is really potty!" said Frank Nugent. "He's always was a fibber, but what's the good of fibs like that?"

"I'm not a fibber!" growled Wally. "If you fellows had any sense— But you haven't!"

"There's the apology!" said Wharton. "Repeat it, word for word, Bunter!"

"Rats!"

"You'll be bumped till you do!" said the captain of the Remove grimly. "Mind, we mean business, Bunter! You've made us all look small by acting like a cad and talking like one, and you've got to set it right! Will you do as you're told?"

"No!"

"Collar him!" shouted Wharton, as the fat junior made a spring for the door.

Peter Todd grasped Bunter, to swing him back. To Peter's surprise, he was swung round himself, and sent whirling. He crashed into Bob Cherry, who was springing forward, and the two juniors rolled on the carpet together, roaring.

In a flash Bunter had the door open, and was fleeing along to the staircase.

"Stop him!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Oh! Ow! Ah!" roared Bob. "You idiot, Toddy—"

"You fathead!" howled Peter.

"You've biffed my chin! Ow-ow—"

"You mean you've bunged your silly chin on my napper! What did you pitch into me for?" roared Bob Cherry wrathfully.

"That villain Bunter—"

"Fancy letting that fat duffer handle you like that!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I—I—I'm blessed if I know how he did it!" gasped Peter, staggering to his feet. "I never knew he was so hefty before! Ow, my chin!"

"Ow, my napper!" groaned Bob.

"After him!"

The juniors ran out of the study in pursuit of Bunter. But the fat junior was gone. He was not seen again till dinner-time. Grim looks were fastened on him at the dinner-table, and when the Remove left the dining-room half a dozen juniors gathered round Bunter before he could flee. Bob Cherry gripped one fat arm, and Johnny Bull the other.

"Now, you fat boulder—"

"Leggo!" howled Wally, struggling.

"Yank him along!"

"Bless my soul!" Mr. Quelch came along from the dining-room. "Wharton, I have said several times that I do not approve of horseplay in the House—"

The juniors melted away. Wally Bunter grinned, and retreated to the hall window and sat down in the window-recess. There he was safe till lessons began in the afternoon.

But the evil hour was only postponed. The Removite fellows gave him signifi-

cant looks when he turned up in class that afternoon. And Wally realised that when classes were over he would be cornered, and there would be no escape.

When Mr. Quelch dismissed the Remove, the fat junior scuttled to the door, hoping to escape first. But Mr. Quelch's voice rapped out:

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, sir?"

"What do you mean by rushing to the door in that disorderly manner?" asked the Remove-master severely. "This is not a bear-garden, Bunter! Come back at once, and go out with the rest in proper order!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" mumbled Wally, as he came back, crestfallen, and rejoined the grinning Removites.

He marched out in order with the rest, and the moment they were outside the Form-room Wharton and Bob Cherry linked arms with Bunter. The fat junior was marched on down the passage and out into the quadrangle, resisting in vain.

"And now for Cliff House!" said Wharton.

"Look here——" protested Wally.

"Get a move on!"

"I won't! I——"

"Help him along, Bob! You've got the biggest boots!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Are you coming, Bunter?"

Bunter came.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Toeing the Line!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. started cheerfully for Cliff House, with the fat junior in their midst. Once safe outside the gates of Greyfriars they released his arms, but kept round him, ready to cut him off if he attempted to bolt. Bunter was proving himself an unexpectedly slippery customer.

Wally Bunter walked on, amid the watchful five, with a troubled and frowning brow. The ordeal that awaited him at Cliff House School was simply intolerable. To confess to having acted and spoken like a cad was rather too bitter a pill to swallow, and he was not at all sure that Miss Clara would not box his ears, after all, when they were within reach. The Co. had no mercy on him, and from their point of view they were hardly to be blamed. Wally would certainly have acted in the same way in their place—he had to admit that. His sentence was just for Billy Bunter. But he was not Billy Bunter, and that made all the difference.

He blinked round him watchfully, looking for a chance to bolt. But his escort were watchful, too; and when Wally carelessly stepped aside Bob Cherry carefully shoved him back.

"No, you don't!" remarked Bob.

"Look here, you rotter——"

"Get on!"

Bob Cherry made a motion with his boot, and Bunter got on without waiting for the boot.

The juniors turned into Pegg Lane, and there Frank Nugent ran on ahead, to warn Marjorie & Co. that they were coming. Wally's look grew more and more morose as they drew nearer to Cliff House. Suddenly he stumbled over a stone and fell.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"Come on, clumsy!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Help me up!" said Wally, in a faint voice. "My ankle! Ow!"

"Have you hurt your ankle, fathead?"

"Only malingering," said Wharton.

"We know Bunter!"

Bob Cherry bent to help the fat junior up. Wally put his hands on Bob's

shoulders, and threw his full weight upon him. Bob was a sturdy youth, but he was not quite equal to that strain.

"Leggo!" he roared.

"Help me!" panted Wally.

"Leggo, you porpoise—I'm not a steam crane! Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob, as he pitched forward and sprawled over the fat junior.

Wally Bunter rolled aside and leaped to his feet. With a spring he was out of reach of the juniors, and plunging through a hedge.

"After him!" yelled Wharton.

Bob Cherry scrambled up. Wharton, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were plunging furiously through the hedge in pursuit of Bunter.

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "The fat spoofer—I knew he was shamming! Collar him!"

"Stop!" roared Wharton.

Wally Bunter was streaking across the field in great style, and the juniors rushed hotly on his track. The fat junior was holding his own, however, in spite of the weight he had to carry. The speed he put on surprised the chums of the Remove. But luck was against the unfortunate Wally—a high fence loomed up ahead of him.

"We've got him!" panted Johnny Bull.

Wally ewerved, taking a new direction; but he had lost ground, and the pursuing juniors cut across and reached him. He was still in full flight, when Wharton's hand fell on his shoulder from behind.

"Stop!" panted Harry.

Wally stopped—so suddenly that Wharton crashed into him, and went spinning back from the shock.

"Oh! Yah! Oh!"

Wally Bunter started again; but Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh were upon upon him, grasping at him. The fat junior turned desperately, and a drive on the chest sent Johnny Bull spinning.

But the nabob was grasping him, and Wally closed with the dusky youth from India's coral strand. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh found him an unexpectedly tough handful as they struggled.

"Leggo, you silly chump!" gasped Wally.

"My esteemed and rascally Bunter, I——"

"Hold him, Inky!" panted Johnny Bull, scrambling out of a muddy furrow.

"The holdfulness is terrific!" grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Wharton and Johnny Bull grasped the fat junior, and in a moment more Bob Cherry arrived, and grasped the back of his collar. Wally Bunter was a prisoner once more.

"You fat boulder!" shouted Bob.

"What do you mean by giving us all this trouble?"

"Let go!" howled Wally.

"Will you come along?"

"No!"

"You'll be carried, then."

"Leggo! Yaroooh! I'll—I'll—— Oh, my hat!"

The four juniors captured an arm or a leg each, and Wally Bunter was swung off the ground. Bob and Johnny Bull tucked Bunter's fat legs under their arms and led the way. Wharton and Inky followed with an arm each. Only Wally's head was left free.

"If you prefer to arrive at Cliff House like this it's your funeral," remarked Wharton.

"Ow! Leggo! Oh!"

"No fear!"

The four juniors tramped across the field and got out into the lane again. They marched grimly along the lane, with the spread-eagled junior in their grasp, to an accompaniment of excited objurgations from the unfortunate Wally.

Cliff House came in sight at last. The

juniors headed for the garden gate. Two junior girls were chatting outside the gate, and they looked round in amazement at the sight of the peculiar procession.

"What on earth——" began Barbara Redfern.

"What's the name of this game?" inquired Mabel Lynn.

"Bunter's come along to apologise to Clara," explained Bob Cherry. "He doesn't care about walking—rather fat, you know—so we're carrying him."

"Yaroooh! Pummie down!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nugent's gone in," said Barbara, laughing. "Shall I open the gate?"

"Please."

"There you are!"

Barbara held the gate open, while the Co. marched in with the unhappy Wally. Frank Nugent came through the trees and joined them.

Bunter was set on his feet now, gasping for breath. But Bob Cherry kept an iron grip on his collar.

"Is Clara about, Franky?" asked Wharton.

"I've just seen Marjorie," answered Nugent. "Clara's with her father, up the garden; her father's here on a visit. Marjorie's going to tell her we're here."

"Good!"

"I'm not going to see her!" howled Wally. "I tell you I never said a word——"

"Dry up!"

"Don't make a vow," advised Nugent. "Clara's father isn't very far away, and if you bring him on the scene he may cut up rusty if he finds out what's the matter. He looks a bit of a Tartar."

Wally panted.

He certainly did not want to interview Mr. Trevlyn, under the circumstances. It was probable that Clara's father would be very angry indeed if he discovered what the trouble was.

"You silly asses!" groaned the fat junior. "I tell you I'm not going to repeat all that rot to Clara Trevlyn!"

"You jolly well are—every word!"

"I won't!" howled Wally.

"You'll be bunned till you do!" said Wharton grimly. "You've asked for it, Bunter. Another time you'll be more careful how you let your chin wag."

"I tell you I never said——"

"Cheese it! What's the good of lying?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they come!"

Marjorie Hazeldene came through the shrubbery, with Clara Trevlyn and Dolly Jobling. The three girls were smiling. But Miss Clara's smile vanished at the sight of Bunter, and her blue eyes gleamed.

"So you've brought him here?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, Clara," said Wharton meekly.

"Good! Now I'll box his ears——"

"Hold on! He's been licked already; we gave him the gauntlet in the dorm last night, after giving him a fair trial," said Harry hastily. "We've brought the boulder here to apologise."

Miss Clara gave a sniff.

"I think it's better to box his ears," she said.

"Oh, Clara!" murmured Marjorie.

"He's ready to apologise," urged Nugent. "He's got it all ready—full and complete apology."

"I haven't! I won't!" howled Wally.

"Look here, Miss Trevlyn, I never said a word about you—never mentioned your name. Honour bright!"

"Rot!" said Miss Clara. "Hazel said that——"

"Never mind what Hazel said. It isn't so!" panted Wally.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 575.

"That is not true!" exclaimed Marjorie indignantly. "It was very silly of my brother to tell Clara; but he was speaking the truth. How dare you say he was not speaking the truth!"

"Oh, dear!" gasped Wally, dismayed by this flank attack, as it were. "I—I never said Hazel wasn't telling the truth, Miss Marjorie. 'I'm sure he wouldn't do anything else. But—'"

"Well, if he was telling the truth, that settles it," said Clara. "You said things that only a fat, unpleasant, conceited, nasty low bounder would say!"

"I didn't!" groaned the unhappy Wally.

"You've just admitted you did."

"No; I didn't mean that. I meant— Oh, dear! I can't explain, but it's all a mistake!"

"There's no mistake about the bumping you're going to get if you don't apologise at once," said Harry Wharton. "Now, then, go ahead! The ladies are waiting."

"And buck up!" said Miss Clara imperatively. "My father's waiting for me. He's got a train to catch this evening, and he doesn't know why I've left him. I think, on the whole, I'd better box your ears."

"Keep off!" howled Wally. "I—I say, don't be a beast, you know! I—I'm willing to say that I'm sorry anything ever happened—"

"Will you repeat the apology as you've been told?" demanded Wharton.

"No! I—"

"Bump him!"

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Marjorie.

There was a wild howl from Wally Bunter as he his fat person smote the greensward under the trees. He was not being handled gently.

"Yarooooop!"

"Shurrup!" gasped Nugent. "You'll have Mr. Trevlyn here in a jiffy."

"Yooooop!"

"Look out!" exclaimed Dolly Jobling.

"Here he comes!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The juniors released Bunter all of a sudden, and spun round as a stout, portly gentleman came through the trees. Wally Bunter sat in the grass and gasped.

"What—" began the stout gentleman.

"Ahem!"

"H'm!"

"What—why— Bless my soul!" exclaimed the stout gentleman as his eyes fell on Wally Bunter. "My poor lad! It is you!"

"Oh, crumbs!" ejaculated Wally.

He scrambled to his feet, and the stout gentleman seized his fat hand and wrung it with great heartiness, while the rest looked on and wondered whether they were dreaming.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Amazing!

"MY dear, brave boy!" exclaimed Mr. Trevlyn.

"What the merry dickens!" murmured Bob Cherry blankly. "I—I didn't know your pater knew Bunter, Clara."

But Clara was as astounded as the rest.

"I didn't, either," she said. "Father, d-d-d-do you know Bunter?"

"I did not know this splendid lad's name," said the stout gentleman. "I only know that he was a Greyfriars boy. This is the lad I have mentioned to you, Clara, who ran a great risk to get me out of danger last evening on the cliffs."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Oh, my hat!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 575.

"Bunter!"

Wally Bunter grinned.

He remembered the stout gentleman well enough. The gentleman seemed to be in a better temper than on the previous day. Doubtless he had had time to reflect upon the service the Greyfriars junior had rendered him. Certainly he seemed full of gratitude and kind feeling now.

He shook hands with Bunter two or three times before he relinquished the podgy fingers.

The chums of the Remove stood dumb.

"You—you know Bunter, sir?" Harry Wharton found his voice at last. "You—you say Bunter—"

"You are this brave lad's schoolfellow, I presume?" said the stout gentleman, with a smile. "You should be proud of him."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Pip-pip-proud of Bunter!" stuttered Johnny Bull. "Wake me up presently, Bob!"

"He has not told you of the occurrence?" asked Mr. Trevlyn, with a curious glance at the juniors.

"Nunno!"

"I am not surprised: modesty is usually found with courage and devotion," said the stout gentleman.

"Courage—devotion—Bunter!" murmured Bob.

"I started from Friardale yesterday afternoon to walk to Cliff House by the cliff path," said Mr. Trevlyn. "It seems there are two paths, and I took the dangerous one, owing to the carelessness of the local authorities in omitting to place a signpost at the turning. I slipped on a rock, and fell over the edge of the path. Fortunately, after being there some time, I heard someone whistle, and I called for help, and this brave lad came to my aid."

"B-b-b-bunter did?" stammered Wharton.

"Yes. I am afraid I did not at the time recognise how much he was doing for me, a perfect stranger," said the stout gentleman. "I was—ahem!—a little irritated. He certainly ran a great risk in coming down the cliff for me. If he had slipped, he might have been killed."

"Not a bit of it, sir," said Wally.

"There wasn't the slightest risk, if a chap had his wits about him."

"There was great risk!" said the stout gentleman emphatically. He was evidently a gentleman who did not like to be gainsaid. "The risk was certainly very great."

"Oh, just as you like, sir," said Wally resignedly.

"Bunter—I am glad to know your name, my boy—Bunter risked his life, and helped me over the cliff," said Mr. Trevlyn. "I remembered afterwards that I had not asked his name. Telling my daughter of the occurrence to-day, I asked her if she could guess whom my rescuer was. She suggested that it might have been a lad named Cherry—"

"Oh!" said Bob.

"Blessed if I thought of Bunter," said Miss Clara candidly. "I thought it might be Bob, as dad said it was a Greyfriars chap. But Bunter—oh, my hat!"

"What a surprise!" murmured Bob.

"The surprisefulness is terrific!"

"I am very glad that I have seen you before my departure, Bunter," said Mr. Trevlyn. "When I had—ahem!—recovered a little from the shock I had received, I remembered that I had not asked your name. If I had known it, I should certainly have called at Greyfriars to thank you to-day. I am very glad, my dear boy, that I have had this opportunity. It appears that this is one of your schoolboy friends, Clara?"

"Oh!" gasped Clara, "Mum-mum-my friends! Oh! Ah—"

Wally Bunter chuckled.

"Thank you once again, my boy," said Mr. Trevlyn, shaking hands with Wally Bunter again. "I shall never forget the courage you showed—never! I hope you will not forget it, Clara."

And, shaking Bunter's fat hand for the last time, Mr. Trevlyn left the juniors. Clara went with him—but she ran back for a moment.

"I won't box your ears now, Bunter!" she said, as the fat junior jumped back in alarm. "And—and you needn't apologise!"

"I—I say, Miss Clara," stammered Wally, "I—I want you to believe that—that I never said anything about you. I can't explain how it was, but it was all a mistake. Do believe me!"

"Well, I'll try!" said Clara.

And she ran after her father. Marjorie and Dolly Jobling nodded to the juniors, and followed Clara Trevlyn. Harry Wharton & Co. stood looking at Bunter blankly.

Wally blinked at them over Billy's spectacles.

"Well?" he said.

"Well!" said Wharton, with a deep breath. "You've got off cheaply, you fat bounder. You seem to have acted rather decently—"

"Courage—devotion—and Bunter!" murmured Johnny Bull. "The things don't seem to fit together, somehow."

"Oh, I don't know!" said Nugent. "He did pull me out of the river that time, you know. It surprised us, but there it was. After that, nothing Bunter does will ever surprise me."

"And he risked his life," murmured Wharton dazedly, "on the cliff—"

"I didn't!" said Wally.

"What? Mr. Trevlyn said—"

"Oh, that's all rot!" said the fat junior. "He thinks he was in terrific danger, but he wasn't, you know. Anybody could have done what I did."

Wharton blinked at him.

"You—you—you're making out that you haven't done much, when you've got a chance of spreading yourself and bragging no end," he said. "What on earth do you mean by it, Bunter? What's come over you?"

"Br-r-r-r-r!" said Wally.

He rolled away, and the chums of the Remove followed him into the lane. They simply did not understand. Bunter had been brought there to apologise for acting like a worm, and he had been recognised as a modest and unassuming hero! It was rather too much of a puzzle for the Removites.

"Well, as Clara's satisfied, we're letting you off!" said Harry Wharton at last. "But you needn't have spoiled the effect, Bunter, by telling lies at the finish. Why couldn't you own up to Clara, and say you were sorry for what you said?"

"Because I never said anything."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob. "Can't you tell the truth for once—just for once, Bunter, as a sample?"

"I've never told anything but the truth."

"Eh?"

"Never once!"

"Oh, dear! Carry me home, somebody!" said Bob Cherry faintly.

"Fathead!" growled Wally. And he rolled away in the dusk, with a snort; and Harry Wharton & Co. followed him, in a wondering frame of mind.

Bunter of the Remove was too much for them. They simply gave him up.

(Don't miss "THE BLACK SHEEP OF HIGHCLIFFE!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by Frank Richards.)

Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY?"

ROBIN HOOD'S WHISTLE.

By DICK BROOKE.

I.

THE first rays of sunrise began to warm the little clouds floating high over Sherwood Forest, a thrush piped cheerily, there was a stir in the heart of a thicket beside the rough road, and Master Peter Tubb crawled out, rubbing his heavy eyes.

"Hey, lad! Hup!" he cried sharply. And a big brown bear crept noiselessly to his side, sat up, and whined hungrily.

"'Tain't no good, lad!" said Peter. "Not a bite for us till we've earned it; and, seeing as we've got a long step to go afore we gets to Nottingham, we'd best be jogging. Hup!"

With that they got going, pausing only to drink from a wayside runnel. But it seemed that they were not the only early risers thereabouts. Presently the thud of hoofs sounded on the road behind them, and Peter drew aside to let the rider pass. There was ample room. If the horse had not caught sight and scent of the bear all would have been well. As it was the bear shied, and the next moment, as Peter ran to its head, bucked, hurling him violently against a tree.

In a twinkling the rider had dismounted, thrown the reins over a branch, and was kneeling by the fallen man. Peter, looking up dazedly, saw a pair of bright blue eyes shining from a pretty brown face, crowned by a mass of fair hair.

"Preserve us!" he stuttered. "It's a gal!"

"Oh, ay!" said she, smiling. "But what of it? Be you hurt?"

"No-o," replied Peter. "Only shook up. I ain't had nothing to eat since noon yesterday, which is why I went down so easy. I be sorry as how Barney frightened your hoss. We be going to Nottingham Fair. Barney, he do tumble and play the sojer, and I takes the groats."

At this Barney, hearing his name, shuffled into the middle of the road and threw a somersault; then, rising on end, began to rub his empty stomach, whining mournfully.

"Is he hungry, too?" asked the girl.

"He be mortal hungry—worsen than me, him being bigger," replied Peter mournfully.

"Then here's for ye both!" she cried; and, running to the horse, which by this time was quiet, took a long slab of cold roast venison and a hunk of bread from a saddle-bag. "Stow these away, and let's be moving," said she. "I'm for the fair, too. Speed, good man!"

Neither Peter nor Barney needed urging. They put the provender where it would do most good in quick time, and in a very much happier mood trudged forward, the girl rein-ing her horse to their pace.

"We be going to London, and there we be going to stay," Peter explained. "A fine place, London. A man can get a living there without having to run the roads and risk having his throat cut and his bear took from him. There be thieves hereabouts, I been told. There be one Robin Hood as lies up in this here forest, I ha' heard."

The girl flushed red with anger.

"Robin Hood is no thief, I would ha' you know!" she said fiercely. "He but takes from rich knaves some of the wealth that they have fished from poor folks that he may restore it to those who have been robbed. Never a poor man for ten mile round Sherwood but blesses his name and prays the saints to keep him from harm. I give ye good day, Master Bearward. Get a more charitable tongue afore ye speak o' Robin again, or ye may happen on them that'll cut it short for ye!"

With that she set spurs to her steed and disappeared round a bend of the road, leaving Peter gaping.

"Hoity-toity! Here's a to-do!" he exclaimed. "I only says his name, and she flies off in a tantrum. Mighty queer doings, I call it, Barney lad! Howsumnever, she were a kind lass, and— Why, what's that there? She ha' cotched trouble, surely!"

From beyond the turning came a shout, a

scream, a confused trampling of horses' hoofs, and a cackle of hoarse laughter. Peter didn't wait for more. Whirling his iron-bound quarterstaff round his head, he charged straight through the intervening bushes, and came out on the edge of a high bank directly above the spot where his companion of a minute before struggled in the grip of a tall, black-bearded man clad in sable, with a white cloak, bearing a black cross on the left shoulder, floating behind him. With one hand he strove to drag the girl from her saddle, while the other held her right arm powerless to use the dagger she had drawn to defend herself. A little beyond another black figure—a squire or page—sat laughing delightedly.

"Let her be!" yelled Peter; and he leapt, bringing his staff crashing down upon the outstretched arm even as he touched earth.

"Himmel!" howled the black cross knight. "Schweinhund!" He loosed the girl and clutched at his sword-hilt. Another moment, and Peter would have been cut down in his tracks. But he didn't wait for that. He swung the heavy staff, and it descended, with a frightful smashing sound, as of wood meeting wood, upon the ferocious stranger's peacock-feathered velvet-cap and the head beneath it. Not the thickest skull in Christendom or out of it could have stood that blow. Whitewentle's fingers fell from his hilt, his burly body sagged over sideways, and with a grunt he slithered helplessly to the ground, and lay motionless.

"Behind you!" screamed the girl.

Peter twirled on his heels—too late. Above him towered the squire, his heavy sword flashing as it began to descend. Even as he whirled his staff to guard Peter knew that he was doomed. But, like a furry thunderbolt, Barney put in an appearance. A bear looks a clumsy beast, but looks are deceptive. When it is really necessary he can move with the speed of greased lightning. Barney saw his master attacked, and he moved—from the top of the bank to the squire's shoulders.

Smash! Crash! Man, horse, and bear came down in a tangled heap. The horse, scared out of its seven senses, scrambled to its feet and bolted into the forest, followed by its companion; while Barney, crouched upon the apparently lifeless squire, growled horribly.

"Saints ha' mercy! What ha' we been and done?" cried Peter. "What sort o' folks is these here that goes for to mishandle you this way? Outlandish folks, I reckon."

"That they be!" said the girl. "I heard that they had come to the Priory at Alfreston from Almaine—that is somewhere overseas—asking help against the heathen."

"Seems mighty like to me as they're heathen themselves!" growled Peter. "I've a mind to put a stop to their goings on once and for all!" And he drew an ugly knife and fingered it lovingly.

"No!" commanded the girl. "That would be work fit for them, maybe, but not for a proper Englishman. Drag 'em into the brush and let 'em bide. They have thick heads, I think. Maybe they'll come to themselves in a while."

Peter obeyed; and, since the blue eyes watched every movement, he did not search the pouches of the fallen for the spoils of war, as he might have done had he been alone.

"There!" he said. "Reckon they'll bide there snug enough. And, mistress, that there I said about Robin weren't meant like: 'Twas just what I heard. He's a good fellow, I make no sort o' doubt."

"He is!" she said. "Now, come hither, that I may thank you. So!" And as she spoke she stooped from her saddle and threw a light chain of silver, with a long silver whistle hung from it, about his neck. "If anyone would do you a hurt in Sherwood, or anywhere near about the forest—ay, even to the gates of Nottingham—sound it three times, and help will come. Now I must go on.

There may be a hue-and-cry after these two outland beasts, so hurry also. Good luck till we meet again!"

This time she departed smiling and waving her hand, leaving Peter alternately scratching his head and staring at the silver whistle with the utmost amazement.

"Well, I'm hanged!" he grunted. "What sorter lass is she, anyhow? Where may she live—eh, Barney, lad?"

But Barney only growled, being still sore because he had not been allowed to finish the job he had begun so well; and, bethinking himself that it would be well to get far from the scene of his exploits as soon as possible, Peter once again turned his steps towards Nottingham.

II.

THAT year Nottingham Fair was not held in the market-place, as it had been for a century or two before, because the shopkeepers there had complained of losses they had suffered from filching fingers and the competition of traders who set up booths and tents under their very noses and undersold them. They had petitioned the mayor, and he, good man, seeing his way to turning an honest penny, promptly agreed. He gave orders that the fair was to be held in the Long Field, outside the West Gate, and that every trader or showman could pay for the privilege of setting up there, which, since he happened to own the field, was good business for the mayor.

So it came about that no sooner had Peter arrived and begun to put Barney through his paces in the midst of a small crowd than a fat, pompous little man bobbed up at his elbow, waving a white wand of office under the bear's nose.

"Two pennies, my man!" said he, holding out his hand. "Pay the same forthwith, and ye are free of the fair for this day, nevertheless and notwithstanding, so be it!"

Peter slapped the purse that hung empty at his thigh.

"Lookee there, brother! Ain't got a stiver so far. Howsumnever, if you waits a bit till I passes the hat, then I'll pay. Not before, seeing I ain't got nothing to pay with."

This was reasonable enough, and perhaps the fat official, who on ordinary days was only the town bellman, might have agreed if he hadn't been called "brother." That upset his dignity, and he lost his temper at once.

"Off wi' you, instanter and incontinent, you gallowbird!" he bawled; and in his zeal he seized Barney by the collar and began to drag him off the fair-ground.

Now, Barney thought this was all part of his show. He rose up on his hind legs, seized the bellman gently but firmly by as much of his waist as he could gather in without spoiling him, and began to dance solemnly round and round, while the crowd cheered and laughed.

"Help!" howled the bellman. "Murder! Call the town guard! Master Mayor! Master Mayor! I be done to death!"

"Pay him, or they'll have you to gag!" said a voice at Peter's back; and, turning, he saw a tall man with a hood drawn over his face, who thrust two pennies into his hand and disappeared in the throng.

Peter gave the word of command. Barney released his prisoner, who, stammering with fear and rage, would have made off to lay his complaint at once, if he hadn't seen the money in the bearward's hand. The mayor had promised him a share in the day's takings, and every little helps. Greed overcame resentment, and he snatched the pennies.

"Why couldn't you pay when you was axed?" he growled. "You and your beast look to it as I don't have to speak to you no more. Bear in mind as the eye of the law is on you, nevertheless and notwithstanding, so be it!" Wherewith he pushed his way through the crowd, and was presently

boat to sight, leaving everybody in the best of humours. Never had Peter a better audience, and he rose to the opportunity.

"Gentles all!" he shouted. "You've a-seen as how this here bear can dance, good as any blessed knight at the King's Court. He learned that there from his mother, which was own dancer to the Emperor of Ind, a country where the folks is all black by reason of the sun being that hot that it do burn their skins and frizzles of their hair. It be that far off, that though he were only a little 'un when he started to come to England, he were full-growed when he were landed, the same being a matter o' nigh ten year. With his teeth he can chew the leg bones of a ox same as you would a lark's, but don't do it through being taught proper and fearing his master. He do know how the sojers of the Emperor done their exercise wif their pikes, which ain't so different from ourn, and will show that same wif this here staff, likewise other matters, hoping to please you gentles all, me being a poor man, but honest. Hup!"

So Barney hopped, carried pike, charged pike, and grounded pike in first-class style, danced with his master, threw somersaults, and finally stood on his head for as long as one might take to count twenty. Then he went round with Peter's battered hat, return with a record cargo.

"That lass brought me luck!" thought Peter. "Here be a-many farthings and pennies and groats. Hi, you with the hood!"

He had just caught sight of the man who had befriended him, and beckoned, meaning to repay the money; but apparently the tall man was shy, for he dived behind a booth, and though Peter had glimpses of him at intervals between performances, throughout the long morning he never came within hail.

At noon the crowd thinned out. Some returned to the town for dinner, others equatted, munching, in groups about the booths where food was sold; and Peter had time to refresh himself and Barney. Lying in the shade of a great elm he counted his takings, gloating over the best haul he had ever made, and dreaming of the days when he might be able to set up shop, in London town. Suddenly the harsh voice of the bellman cut across the beautiful vision.

"This way he went, I warrant you!" it

said. "A parlous knave, thinks I to myself the moment I clapped eyes on him; a foul fellow, ripe for hanging! Lookee, masters! Lookee! There he be, and his beast by him! Down wif him, masters!"

Peter looked round wildly, and what he saw almost petrified him, for there, cutting him off from the open country and the distant fringe of the forest, were half a dozen mounted men, the foremost of whom was the Sheriff of Nottingham himself, while on either hand rode the white-mantled, black cross knight and his dismal-looking squire, their heads bound up in great turban-like bandages. Behind were three men-at-arms, but these were so full of good brown ale that they could scarce keep their saddles, and so hardly counted.

None the less, Peter was in desperate case, for he knew very well that he would have less than no chance of life once the law had him. Nobody would listen to his story, or weigh his word against that of a knight, albeit a foreigner, and from court-room to gallows was but a very short step. He gripped his quarterstaff, resolved, if he must, to die fighting. Something cold slipped into the breast of his shirt, and he remembered the silver whistle. He had little faith in its powers, but at least he could try them; and, jerking the thing to his lips, he blew three long blasts.

The sheriff drew rein. Perhaps he had heard that shrill blast before, or perhaps he was only astounded at the fellow's audacity. At least, he paused for a moment, and in that moment several things began to happen. Out of a clumsy tilt-waggon, that had stood for hours at the edge of the fair field, tumbled half a dozen stout, well-armed fellows, dressed in Lincoln green, who as they alighted strung long-bows and laid arrow to string. A group of innocent-looking fellows in smocks, sitting at a table, threw off their sheep's clothing, and showed themselves of the same company; and a burly monk, who had been making sheep's-eyes at every pretty girl in the fair, grabbed a polo and put himself at their head; while from nowhere in particular, as it seemed, the hooded man who had bestowed the pence ran to Peter's side, bow in hand.

The sheriff raised the horn that hung by his side to summon help. Twang! Squeak!

What should have been a ringing call began and ended in an absurd squeak, while the sheriff glared helplessly at the arrow transfixing his instrument.

The tall man laid another on his string.

"An' ye move or cry for aid, Master Sheriff, this next will be through your neck!" said he coolly. "If ye want work for the hangman, give him those two blackavised villains beside ye, not this good fellow, who but did his proper duty saving of a woman from their clutches! Look to it, Master Sheriff, and so, good-day to ye! Come you, Peter! In wif you!"

Up thundered the waggon, in scrambled Peter, with Barney at his heels. Half the green men followed, others leapt on horses tethered to a hedgerow. And even as the sheriff, recovering from his stupor, grabbed a horn from one of his grinning followers and blew his loudest, the whole cavalcade swept off towards the forest.

The pursuit was not very hot, for the few men who answered the sheriff had no stomach for a fight against first-class marksmen. Only the black cross knight, mad with fury at seeing his vengeance balked, began to draw up as the waggon slowed at an ascent. The long man picked up his bow.

"An' you will have it!" said he. "There! Take that, wif Robin's good wishes!"

With which he let fly, skewering the knight's remaining sound arm. The rest fell back in confusion. Peter was confused also. He had had no time to think, and his brains were not of the brightest.

"What's that there you said?" he asked.

"Robin! Why, be you Robin Hood?"

The tall man nodded.

"The same. And your friend for this morning's work, seeing that it was my good wife, the which is called Maid Marian in these parts, that you succoured. Now come you to my camp in Sherwood till this business is blown over and you can travel once more."

"And Barney?" asked Peter doubtfully.

"Barney shall dance in Lincoln green, an' it pleases him."

"Then we're for the greenwood!" shouted Peter. "Robin Hood for ever!"

And with that the waggon drew under the nearest trees of Sherwood Forest.

THE END.

GRANDFER AGAIN!

By CEDRIC HILTON.

[EDITORIAL NOTE.—I fancy there is quite a lot of imagination about Hilton's yarn. He and Price and Tomlinson major are not such bold, bad blades at Greyfriars, anyway.—H. W.]

I.
"DEAR Maggot"—(That's Price's way of addressing me).—"Tomlinson is going down to Deddole to pay his grandfather a surprise visit. He hasn't invited either of us, but that's a mere particle."

"I have written to Tommy telling him to expect us, and have arranged that we shall all meet at Crasham Junction—that is, if I'm up in time for the train. So, emmet-face, obey your orders, or prepare for the gibbet! Next Monday is the day, and my train, with any luck, arrives at Crasham Station at 2.20. Your plans, old boy, are your own look-out."

"Now, take heed, or I'll lick you when we get back to Greyfriars."

"Love from your superior,
"PRICE."

On the back of the envelope, which had been stuffed with potato-parings to make it look ship-shape, was a drawing intended to represent my supposed ancestor at the Zoo. The letter, I might say, was unstamped, and cost me eightpence. That's Price's cheerful way of doing things.

As the holidays were nearly over, and the pater was complaining all day about my cutting my initials on the green cloth of his billiard-table, I thought I would accept this invitation. So I went into his study and showed him the letter.

"Humph!" was his answer. "That young Price again? Well, I suppose you may go. I, for one, shall be glad to get rid of you, my boy. Mind you don't get up to mischief."

That was good enough. I simply made out

a list of things I should be likely to want, and waited patiently for next week to come.

My train drew up at Crasham Junction on Monday at half-past two to the very tick. I had no sooner alighted than I was aware of a great commotion on the opposite platform.

Round the bookstall stood a crowd. I knew as well as if someone had bawled the news in my ear that Price and Tomlinson were concerned in that crowd. Those two get mixed up in everything that's unpleasant. One day it's a quarrel with a drunken navvy, the next a half-mile flat handicap with a constable carrying a battered helmet; while an altercation with a motor-cyclist, the mechanism of whose machine has mysteriously become as complicated as a Chinese puzzle during the owner's absence, is almost an hourly occurrence.

The crowd round the bookstall seethed with interest. Its central figure, of course, was Price. He was dancing about like a wasp on a fly-paper, trying to convince an equally excitable stationmaster that he was the victim of injustice. Without any provocation whatever, I learnt, he had deliberately knocked a paste-pot out of a porter's hand, and, dribbling it past a number of infuriated station officials, had scored a brilliant goal through the waiting-room window.

Things looked very black indeed. The constable taking evidence had shut his book with a snap, and Price seemed booked for chokey, sure as eggs.

"And this other young feller," the constable was saying, indicating Tomlinson—"shall I take 'im off as well?"

"I don't know," replied the stationmaster. "He hasn't really done anything, you know, bar setting light to the waiting-room chimney with candle-grease. No; let him go."

Price, however, was not apparently in any

hurry to go to clink. With a smile which took the ladies present off their guard, he commenced a speech, though I don't believe he himself knew what it was about.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "you all, no doubt, witnessed the incident in which, it is stated, I figured as a criminal. I ask you now, intelligent people as you are, if you consider I have done any serious wrong?" (Cries of "No!" "Yes!" and "Shut up!") "I offered to pay for the window," continued Price indignantly. "Besides, it was an accident, as you all saw. If the paste-pot hadn't had such a rotten handle it wouldn't—"

"That's enough, my lad!" interrupted the constable. "Now, you come along o' me! I'll—"

"Look!" exclaimed Price, pointing up at the sky. "Oh, look!"

Then he gave the copper, who was standing with his mouth open gazing upwards, a tremendous barge in the back, and disappeared.

There was a scene then, if you like. Goodness knows what would have happened if we'd stopped. But at that moment our train came in, and Tommy and I cut across the line and caught it just as it was about to leave. A second later the train began to draw slowly out of the station, and Tomlinson and I—the only occupants of the compartment—were left to conjecture what had become of Price.

It was, for once, an uneventful journey into Deddole, for Tomlinson, without the enlivening company of Price, sat like a sphinx gone barmy, glaring without any expression whatever through the great steel-rimmed arrangements he calls spectacles at nothing.

Once, just as we were rounding the last bend before Deddole, Tommy muttered something about the snow-laden trees, or a phrase equally as wishy-washy, and then said he hoped Price wasn't trying to foot the journey.

Price trying to foot the journey! Can you

Imagine it? Why, the boulder has enough check to stop the Royal train if he is in need of a life!

I told Tomlinson not to worry his fat head about the chap, for I knew he would turn up, somehow, like a bent halfpenny. And, sure enough, he did.

Before we had given up our tickets at the barrier I caught a glimpse of Price's grinning phiz through the railings. How he had got to Deddole ahead of the train we were yet to learn.

Old Price was in great fettle. Emphasising his remarks by giving each of us in turn a poke in the ribs, he began to explain.

"Ha, ha, my boys!" he chuckled. "I did you in the eye that time, didn't I? How did I get here? Well, you see that old 'bus stuck up against the lamp there? I found it outside Crasham Police Station. Six-horse, kick start, spiffing engine, and everything complete! Went like a blooming tornado in a delirium. I got here, I believe, in about twelve minutes. That's nearly fifty miles an hour, y'know."

"You found that motor-bike outside the police-station?" yelled Tomlinson. "Crikey, you idiot, that belongs to the inspector, I'll be bound! He'll be along in a minute with a dozen bobbies, and it's quod for you for ever after. Here, let's bunk, quick!"

Price seized his arm.
"No hurry, my lad," he said soothingly. "Plenty of time yet. We'll walk through the village like gentlemen, or not at all. Bless the bobbies! I haven't hurt their 'bus; it's there where they can put their hands on it. So why should they be nasty? The only thing I regret is that I am unable to remain to present it to them, with compliments. Now, Tommy, let's get along to grandfather's. I want my tea."

II.

IT was nearly dusk by this time, and we trudged along the road through the snow, each of us picturing a nice, snug little bungalow, and Tomlinson's grandfather sitting by the fire toasting muffins. It was a pleasant vision, and it kept us quiet until we reached the outskirts of the village.

"Which is grandfather's bungalow, Tommy?" I said, as a few clustered lights came into view. "They all look alike to me."

"They are confusing, no doubt, to a duffer like you, Hilton," said Tomlinson, "but I never make a mistake. Grandfather's is the one with the box hedge in the front, chump!"

"Here it is, then!" exclaimed Price. "Why, the place is in darkness!"

"S-s-so it is!" stuttered that ass Tomlinson. "Jove, you chaps, I hope the beggar hasn't gone away for a month! It would be just like the old chap to get off to Scotland, or be ill."

Price groaned as if stricken with colic.
"If that's the case, my boy," he bawled, "I'm hanged if I don't turn you clean inside-out! Upon my word, you chump, it's a wonder you haven't already been shot in mistake for a gorilla!"

Then followed a somewhat strained interval, with a scrap between Tomlinson and Price apparently well on the way. But, to my disappointment, it did not eventuate. Tommy had edged away as a precaution, and Price was apparently devising some original way of making known our arrival.

"Got it!" he yelled, so suddenly that I shoved six teeth into my tongue. "Tell you what—we'll chuck a brick at the door, and when old Grandfer shoves his head out, snow-ball him. Eh?"

The suggestion was received favourably. While those two guys turned out some nice hard snowballs, I hunted about and found a brick nearly as big as Tomlinson's head. And that's some size!

"Ready!" I said. "Now! One—two—three—"

Wh-u-m-mmm-p!
That brick whacked—some!

The door was opened in under three seconds, and we all shied at the spot where we thought grandfather's head ought to be. Though only a shadow could be seen, I thought the chap looked pretty big; and Grandfer didn't use such nasty words usually. When, too, a strange and nasty voice began to blare at us, and said more terrible things every moment, I had no doubt whatever.

We had come to the wrong house!

Old Price, however, was still chucking snowballs and laughing at the top of his voice. He was just about to heave a monstrous one, when Tomlinson grabbed his arm and hissed:

"Stop, you silly chump! This isn't

Grandfer; it's a copper! Hi, look out! He's coming!"

Talk about hurrying! I went so fast that my feet got nearly red-hot. But that copper seemed to take strides five yards long, and, judging from Tomlinson's horrible howl of despair, the hand of the law must have been nearly on his collar. I was just giving up hope of escape for all of us, when I heard a thud behind, and saw that Price had tripped up the policeman.

That altered everything. Before the boulder could get up, we all three walloped down upon him, and sat on him.

It was a terrible temptation, and we succumbed to it. A real live bobby to handle in the dusk! We didn't really hurt him, of course. We only shoved snow down his silly neck, just to cool him down. Didn't he kick, too! Like a blessed giraffe in a fit! Just when it seemed that we'd got six of his legs tied up, the other umpteen got loose and landed out everywhere. His choice of words, too, was lamentable.

It wasn't safe to give him a chance of chasing us. So we managed at last to fasten his legs together with his whistle-chain and two yards of cord, and handcuffed him with his own handcuffs. Then we blew his whistle and bunked, leaving the image stuck up against the wall, with his under-garments full of snow, and his mouth busy with language no policeman should ever have descended to!

III.

GRANDFATHER'S bungalow was on another road altogether. The dear old chap was having tea when we arrived, and though you can never tell what an old man of eighty-odd is really thinking, he seemed pleased to see us.

"Ah, you boyth again!" he lisped. "No warning of any kind ath uthaal!" Wheeze! "Houthkeeper home in bed, too, with the 'flu." Wheeze! "What—"

"Oh, that's all right, Grandfer!" interposed Tomlinson cheerily. "We've only come for a few days. Besides, we'll do the housework while we're here—won't we, you fellows?"

"Yes, you will," said Price to me.
"He means you, Tommy," I replied. "I'm here to superintend."

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Tomlinson. "Need only pretend we are all eager to work; old Granph swallows anything."

Price was already sitting at the table, eating cake as fast as he could work his jaws, so we understood that delay of any kind meant going short. Tommy waited long enough to supply us all with cups (saucers and plates omitted), and then made a desperate effort to catch up in the eating handicap.

Like most old fossils, Grandfer began at once to brag about his past life. How he had fought thirteen Chinamen with no other weapon than a toasting-fork; how once he saved a princess from getting burnt in a blazing picture-palace, and another chap got the medal. So the old Munchausen went on, becoming more imaginative at every manufactured adventure. So far as we understood, he had also beaten the record high jump by a foot, and had licked a man who could have punched Jimmy Wilde to shreds.

"I ducked under hith famouth thwinger," said Grandfer, "made ath though to punch him in the ribth—wheeze—and then knocked him out with a jab in the Aurora Borealth."

Price's eyes shone with admiration.
"By Jove, Grandfer," he said, "I should like to have a bout with you after tea! As you are a bit middle-aged you can have the gloves, and I'll use my bare fists."

But grandfather was exhausted after his yarn, and though Price and Tomlinson submitted him to a severe fusillade of bread pellets, he nodded and went off to sleep. At the end of about half an hour, after the three of us had washed up the things by leaving them under a running tap, the old fossil woke up, and fetched the chess-board for what he called a "quiet game of cheth."

Tomlinson and I each had a turn at playing him, but, despite the fact that we both took liberties with the rules, the old buffer soon had us tied in knots.

Presently it was Price's turn, and that noodle actually thought he was going to win. After a move or two, however, it was quite certain that he was not. Later on still the game resolved itself into a kind of "Got you, my son!" dodge-about, with Grandfer spluttering out "Check!" every half-minute, like a spoilt boy of six.

Now, there is nothing that annoys me so

much as that senseless smile of conceit that appears on the dial of an old Johnny when he is winning at chess. Grandfer, the old beetle, leaned back in his chair stroking his whiskers and pretending that his mealy cackles were caused by the sight of the cat chasing a spider.

"Haw, haw, haw!" he brayed. "Go on, my lad! Ke-he-he-e-e! Can't you move?"

I don't wonder at old Price getting wild. Anyone would. Stooping to pick up an imaginary pawn, he caught his shoulder in the corner of the chessboard and scattered the pieces all over the room.

Grandfather's second-hand cackle ended suddenly on a top note, and the old fossil looked more like Abraham with dyspepsia than ever.

"There!" he cried. "There, my boy! There, there, there! You clumsy boy! Now you've upthet the board!"

Price, the hypocrite, apologised, and picked up the pieces, putting them on squares they certainly hadn't occupied before. Then he made a succession of brilliant moves that left his opponent hopeless. Just at that moment, however, we bolted to see the village fire-brigade turn out for a false alarm, and when we came back grandfather had rearranged the board to his own advantage. So Price refused to play, and the game ended.

Nothing of further interest happened that evening, except Price's success in breaking one of the two gas-globes with an old cricket-bat. Following that mess-up, he tried to prove that it was an accident, and busted up the other globe.

That just about put the lid on, for the mantles were gone, and after that you couldn't see properly to eat your supper.

IV.

THE next morning was a proper stinger, and no mistake. Wherever there was any water it was frozen as hard as glass—in fact, it had been freezing for days, in spite of the fall of snow the previous day.

As soon as we had finished breakfast Price wanted us all to go off to the skating on the pond at the back of the cemetery. It was not at all a bad idea, and though old Grandfer resisted a bit when we wanted to take him with us, he came at last.

Skating was in full swing when we arrived at the pond. The ice had been swept clear of the snow, and hundreds of people, including a few young officers, each and all were trying to show that they could skate better than anybody else. Hawkers of roasted chestnuts, though knocked off their feet occasionally, were doing a brisk trade, and sweepers must have been taking in the dubs by the handful.

It was impossible to remain spectators only of so gay a scene. The ice simply yelled to us to come on and swank, and we responded to its call. So a little later Price, Tomlinson, and I found ourselves sitting in chairs having skates fixed to our boots.

Price said he didn't believe in going on the ice as if walking the tight-rope over a gun-powder magazine. He believed in going on at full pelt.

"Now then, you chumps, watch me!" he said. And we watched.

Rushing furiously down the bank, he took to the ice with one foot on the level with the back of his head. Then he swung his arms about like a chap practising uppercuts, yelled "Oh, my hat!" and, tumbling heavily, skidded about twenty yards along the ice on his face.

Bless you, that didn't silence Price's trumpet! His skates weren't properly fixed, he said, and the ice was too rough for scientific skating. It was only suitable for the ordinary tear-away, charge-at-everything sort of style.

"Like this!" he yelled. "I'll show 'em!"

And away he went in hurricane fashion. Lots of people saw him coming, and tried to steer clear; but they might as well have tried to dodge a double-sized buffalo. His trail was marked by quite a respectable number of prostrate bodies.

In one short journey across the pond old Pricey had barged over fifteen officers and N.C.O.'s six Grammar School boys, four sweepers, two flappers, and a curate, to say nothing of a chestnut Johnny and his roasting-oven.

He came back looking really delighted.

"That wasn't bad work for a start," he said. "If you charge along like a blooming battleship it makes 'em all respect you."

Now, let's give old Grandfer a good shake-up in a chair. There's one empty over against the bank. See?"

It took a long time to persuade grandfather to risk his neck; but when he had once made up his mind he refused our offer to escort him to the chair.

"I'm over eighty," he wheezed, "but I ain't going to be helped about like an infant!" Wheeze! "I'll walk by myself, if you don't mind."

That's just like an old man. He talks about others being rash, and yet he himself is far worse.

Grandfer took a few shuffling steps as if to assure himself that the ice was not so dangerous as it looked; then he straightened himself up in "I fear nothing" style, and proceeded to walk forward nobly.

"Ha," he exclaimed—"ha, ha! What about this—eh?" And, so saying, he chucked both feet into the air, and stood quite cleverly on his head.

Fortunately, his thick fur cap with earflaps saved him from cracking his skull. But he wasn't over anxious to oblige us with an encore, I can assure you.

Tomlinson had just put the old fathead in the chair when Price made a choking sound in his throat, and pointed to the bank.

"Cr-i-k-e-y, you chaps!" he yelled. "There's a couple of coppers looking at us—and an inspector, too! One is pointing! I'll bet they're after us!"

You can bet they jolly well were, too, for these people jolly well always are, especially when we've got Price with us.

One bobby, about seven feet high, was already coming down the bank, and I knew in a flash that he was the one we had rolled in the snow the previous night. The inspector and the other copper must have come from Crasham about the station affair and the motor-bike; and that looked ominous—very much so.

Price nearly went into fits.

"Quick!" he yelled. "Hurry up! Shift like the very dickens! They'll nab us!"

In a frenzy of despair the three of us seized the ice-chair, and pushed for all we were worth towards the centre of the pond.

Now, an ice-chair isn't an easy thing to steer, and ours seemed to favour a zigzag course, with an occasional swing to the right; about. Moreover, the sight of those men with the bright buttons making a bee-line for us didn't make things any better.

Tomlinson—the ass!—went quite potty. And, what with Grandfer calling out for us to stop, and all of us trying to push in different directions, we didn't make very much progress. Once we went slap bang into a hockey crowd, and sent the whole blinking lot down on the top of the goalkeeper. After that we surprised some Johnny in the middle of a figure eight, and shoved our skates clean through his bowler-hat.

It was the prettiest mix-up you ever saw in your life—everybody and everything in the way, and the number of pursuing imbeciles increasing every other second.

To cap everything, Grandfer kept on trying to jump out of his chair, and his oft-repeated "Thtop, ladth—do thtop! It maketh me dithy!" nearly sent us dotty. Something had to be done, too, for the inspector, treading gingerly across the ice, was making signs to the bobbies to round us off; and lots of skaters we'd upset were charging along in the rear, eager to get at us.

Once more old Grandfer bleated out: "Thtop, ladth—oh, do thtop!" and that finished it. Price simply said "Shut up, you old ass!" and gave such a mighty push at his side of the chair that we swung round to the right-about. Then he told us both to let go, and gave the chair another mighty shove that sent the thing charging back into the crowd.

My word, it was a nasty trick to play on the old Johnny, but it came off! That chair, with Grandfer in it, caught the leading pursuers an awful whack, and made a few of them turn catherine-wheels. Lots of other fellows, too, must have gone over like nine-pins. But we didn't stop to look, for our

chance to make ourselves scarce had to be taken at once.

Just as we reached the bank, after a fierce bit of skating, we heard a loud crackling sound like a lot of glass breaking, and had the pleasure of seeing quite forty merchants go through the ice and flounder about in water up to their waists.

I thought Price would have to be put in a strait-jacket. He laughed until he wept.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he cackled. "Hoo, hoo, hee-e-e! Just look at 'em all! Look at old Grandfer sitting in his chair wondering what it's all about! Pou-u-ugh! I shall die laughing!"

Tomlinson thumped him in the back. "Come on, you idiot!" he said. "They'll be after us in two shakes! Stop your insane cackle, and hurry up! Quick!"

We removed our skates in a jiffy, and left them on the bank. Then we footed it for all we were worth across the ploughed fields. One or two fat old buzzards gave chase, but they were blown in no time, and the only chap who did catch us up Price punched under the jaw, and made him wish he hadn't come.

We cut across country for miles until we found ourselves in the main street of quite a good-sized town, which Tomlinson said was only umpteen miles from his home.

Calling in at an hotel, we managed to get a taxi to do the journey, and at six o'clock that evening Tomlinson, Esq., senior, had the pleasure of welcoming his son and two guests, and paying for the taxi which brought us over.

That was several days ago, and, despite our anxiety, we have heard nothing since about the hobbies or any of the crowd we upset on the ice, so I suppose they thought it best to let the matter drop. I hope so, anyway.

Before we came away from the Tomlinsons' Tommy had a letter from Grandfer saying he thoroughly enjoyed his day on the ice, and hoped to see us all again soon.

Funny old bird, isn't he?

THE END.

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday :

"THE BLACK SHEEP OF HIGH-CLIEFE!"

By Frank Richards.

The stories which deal with the Highcliffe fellows—both Courtenay and the Caterpillar, who are two of the best, and Pon and his pals, who are not at all that way—have always been popular. They figure prominently in next week's yarn, as the title suggests. Spencer of the Highcliffe Sixth, a sportive youth whom we have not met before, also comes into it, though he will figure more largely in the story to follow. And, of course, Wally Bunter plays his part. They still think he is Billy; but he does things in this story which Billy would never have done.

He has been doing that for some time without arousing suspicion. To some of you it may seem queer—perhaps rather far-fetched—that the Greyfriars fellows should not guess. But this a wrong view, I consider. How should they guess?

OLD BOYS' PAPERS.

I had something to say on this subject last week, and I return to it now because I feel sure that it cannot fail to be of some interest to the boys of to-day. It would interest them more, no doubt, if they could see specimens of the old papers about which I am writing. But they would not find most of them anywhere near the papers of to-day.

The illustrations were very different. The old woodcuts that were admired then would be objects of derision now. I was looking through an old volume of the "Young Men of Great Britain" a while back, and nearly every picture struck me as funny, though they were intended to be serious, of course.

"Young Folks" used to have some really good front-page illustrations. It was bigger than any paper of to-day—more like the size of a newspaper. There was nearly always either a historical or an adventure story serial, lending itself to effective illustration, on the

first page. But I dare say some of those sketches would seem out of date now.

The mention of the size of "Young Folks" reminds me of a venture that had a short career. It was the "Boy's Newspaper," and it contained the ordinary news of the day—or such of it as was reckoned suitable to boys—as well as serials, short stories, and articles. But there were no illustrations at all. I can only remember one of the serials—a yarn about the Cornish mines, by George Manville Fenn, I think—but I do recall a special Christmas Number, which, for once, was illustrated. The boys of those days had their pleasures spread out thinner than those of to-day; and that special number was saved for Christmas Day for me!

Some of you have heard of Jack Harkaway. His schooldays were followed by his adventures in many lands. Bracebridge Hemyng, the author of these stories, had great fame. I cannot understand why now. A few years ago one of them was reprinted in one of our papers here, and, honestly, I did not think much of it. There are a score of boys' authors at the present time who could simply knock Hemyng into a cocked hat. His characters were not alive, and his style was anything but great. A far better man was dear old Harcourt Burrage. Who that ever read of them will ever quite forget Handsome Harry, and Cheerful Ching-Ching, and Samson, and Bill Grunt, and Eddard Cutten? They were carried through several immensely long stories. And then we had the next generation, in Young Ching-Ching. Burrage started a paper on the strength of their popularity—"Ching-Ching's Own" it was called, I think; and a very good paper it was. "Tom Tartar" first appeared there; but he had never the fascination for me that the Ching-Ching group possessed.

There used to be real blood-and-thunders in the shape of long stories published in penny numbers, which broke off in the middle of a sentence sometimes. No care was taken to avoid this. When the numbers were bound up—if anyone ever bound them up—there was nothing at all to show that the thing was not a book, published as such. Dick Turpin, and that most atrocious invention of some mind with a taste for the grotesquely horrible, Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street, were among the chief characters thus dealt with; and there were Spring-Heeled Jack, too, and Jack Sheppard. The Robin Hood yarns were on a slightly higher plane.

I don't remember any more just now; but I dare say I shall later on.

THE "PENNY POP."

Ever so many times it has been suggested to me that it would be a good move to republish the stories which tell of the early days at Greyfriars of Herbert Vernon-Smith, known as the Bounder.

There is no room in the MAGNET to do that; but these stories will start in a week or two in the "Penny Pop," and the editor of that paper is anxious that I should call your special attention to them. Which is hereby done, with the hint that none of you who have not already read them can afford to miss them; while as for those who have read them—well, what's the matter with reading them again? I could, I know.

THE "GEM."

And I do hope and trust that none of you miss the "Gem" these days. Billy Bunter is there, you know!

FOOTBALL NOTICES.

Matches Wanted by :

CLAREDALE ATHLETIC 2ND XI.—13-14.—A. Gordon, 15, Cambridge Road, Barking.

CARLETON ROVERS—15½—away matches—5 mile radius.—L. Akerman, 82, Richmond Road, Barnsbury, N. 1.

SELTNAM UNITED—15-16½—away only.—C. Raynham, c/o James & Priestley, Sun Court, Golden Lane, E.C. 1.

BRONDESBURY ROVERS—13-14—away matches only—5 mile radius.—V. Rae, 3, Kingsley Road, Kilburn, N.W. 6.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED—away matches preferred 5 mile radius.—S. J. Rust, 7, Clarkson Road, Barking.

Secretary, 3, Truelock Road, Tottenham, N. 17—14½—5 mile radius of Swan Athenæum.

ST. JAMES' UNITED—16—3 mile radius.—H. Malone, 44, Carnaby Street, Regent Street, W. 1.

Players Wanted by :

ST. MALO UNITED—15-16.—S. C. Nield, 78, St. Malo Avenue, Lower Edmonton, N. 9.

A. Such, 77, High Street, Putney, S.W.—14-15½.

A Walthamstow team—16-18—apply any time after 6 p.m.—A. Smith, 75, Leuca Road, St. James Street, Walthamstow.

BATTERSEA ATHLETIC—14-16—low fees—call or write.—A. Bowater, 60, Lavender Road, Battersea, S.W.

YOUR EDITOR.

15-2-19